



White Paper

The Hidden Cost of Delayed Permits



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As demand for broadband access rises, the telecom industry is under increasing pressure to deploy more fiber networks and close the digital divide.

According to a 2024 study, fiber passes 56.5% of US households¹, and 18% of second homes. Although there are 88.1 million FTTH passings in the US, there are still millions to go to close the digital divide.

Despite aggressive buildout plans, there is one factor that routinely stalls progress: permitting delays. These delays can halt projects, driving up costs and eroding stakeholder confidence. A proactive and strategic approach to permitting is essential to staying on schedule and within budget.

Permitting Challenges

Bureaucracy & Regulatory Complexity

Navigating permitting requirements involves coordinating with numerous agencies, ranging from the Federal Communications Commission and state Public Utility Commissions to the Department of Transportation and Army Corps of Engineers. Each jurisdiction enforces its own regulations, especially when dealing with environmentally sensitive areas or areas with multi-agency oversight, such as railroad or waterway crossings.

Long Lead Times

Because permitting is not a standardized process, some permits inherently take longer. For example, permits involving wetlands or cultural heritage sites typically require up to 180 days, or longer, for approval due to environmental assessments. Agencies requiring more in-depth research may exceed the standard lead times, but this research is critical to prevent construction timelines from being impacted.

Unexpected Costs

When a permit is denied or delayed, the resulting schedule disruptions can be costly. Resubmitting applications, expedited processing, and redesigns often result in thousands of dollars in unforeseen expenses — costs that frequently fall on the provider or end customer.

Case Study: Alabama River Fiber Project

Team Velox successfully navigated and found solutions to permitting requirements associated with a major river crossing in Alabama.

When presented with a project area that initially required underground construction to place fiber cable beneath a riverbed, Velox built relationships with both city and county permitting agencies, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, to determine possible solutions. While considering the potential environmental impacts, permitting and construction requirements, and timelines, team Velox worked with the agencies to identify alternate routes and solutions to cross the waterway.

The collaborative approach with stakeholders not only resulted in expedited project delivery, but it also lessened the cost of the project while ensuring that the environmental impacts of the project were minimized.

1. Hardesty, L. (2024, December 19). [Fiber deployments top another record in 2024.](#)

Network Construction & Damage Prevention

Solutions That Work

Plan Ahead

Permitting follows a consistent process per agency, and early preparation makes a difference. Start with accurate GIS data and in-person field surveys. Include detailed handhole and bore path plans. The more reliable the data, the smoother the approval process.

Build Relationships

Engage local and municipal stakeholders early. Municipalities may be juggling multiple infrastructure initiatives, and aligning project timelines can minimize conflicts. Clear, early communication of the end goal ensures cooperation, mutual understanding, and builds goodwill.

Partner with Experts

Partnering with a team that understands the permitting landscape, including local requirements and agency expectations, can drastically reduce errors and delays. Teams with real-time GIS access, proven locating capabilities, and pre-existing municipal relationships streamline approvals and simplify construction package development.

Chris Helms, President of Velox Professional Services, emphasizes, "Being aware of permit requirements for your area, building necessary relationships, and completing the permitting process ahead of time is key. Permitting delays or missed permits that are required have a direct impact and ripple effect on the delivery of the project."



The Competitive Advantage

Securing permits early enables better forecasting, steadier timelines, and greater stakeholder confidence. It also ensures a seamless handoff between permitting, construction, and network activation. Teams that master permitting aren't just efficient — they're the ones delivering quality networks on time.

About Velox, LLC

A leading provider of contracting services to telecommunications providers, Velox meets the growing need for infrastructure across the country. Based in Huntsville, Alabama, the Velox team provides customers with a seamless experience from network design to fiber construction, emphasizing safety, efficiency, integrity, trust and communication.