

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE October 30, 2020

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Update on Sustainable Development & Construction Permit Processing**

The information provided below is an update to a memo to the City Council on September 11, 2020 and a briefing to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee on September 21, 2020 regarding the Sustainable Development & Construction (SDC) department.

- There is a significant reduction in the backlog of Single Family permits for new construction and additions in the prescreen process. As briefed to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, internal staff were temporarily reassigned and third-party staff from an existing contract with Dal-Tech Engineering were brought in to help clear the queue for administrative screening of submittals.
 - On September 1, 2020: 464 applications in queue
 - As of October 28, 2020: 101 applications in queue
- The department is working to add third-party resources through the City's temporary staffing contract and an Administrative Action to assist with plan reviews. Plan review requires more technical skills and knowledge, so it is more difficult to assign additional resources to this step than the prescreen process. The current surge at this stage is a result of moving the backlog of applications through prescreen. The temporary hiring of staff will be vital to tackling the surge and reducing the overall permitting timeline to acceptable levels.
- Information and Technology Services (ITS) continues to make performance improvements to the ProjectDox electronic plan review system. ITS is redesigning and rehosting the current system environment for greater efficiency and scalability. ITS is also conducting a deep diagnostic on the network at the Oak Cliff Municipal Center, and upgrading staff computers to include Windows 10.
- SDC is dedicated to ensuring that applicants understand the ProjectDox electronic system. SDC has updated training materials available on the department's website. Live virtual training sessions are scheduled for November and December. SDC is also creating instructional videos and FAQs to be posted to the website by December 1, 2020.

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- SDC received seven (7) responses to the Request for Competitive Sealed Proposals (RFCSP) for the “Workflow Evaluation and Staffing Study” project. The Evaluation Committee includes, Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services; Majed Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager; Terry Lowery, Dallas Water Utilities Director; Kris Sweckard, Director, Sustainable Development & Construction. The proposal review and selection process is underway. Council consideration of a contract-is scheduled for December, with a project launch expected in early 2021.
- SDC received four (4) responses to the Request for Competitive Sealed Proposals (RFCSP) to design and develop a “Building Permit and Land Use Planning/Management System.” This information technology and process project will replace Posse, the backbone permitting system currently in use by SDC and partner departments. This replacement project is critical to more effectively review end-to-end processes and make recommendations for long-term technology to support permitting. As each entity has already presented its proposal, selection is scheduled for November. Following negotiations, the contract is anticipated for Council consideration in January.
- CARES Act funding has afforded SDC the opportunity to take on additional information technology projects that due to CARES act requirements, must be completed by December 30, 2020. These projects include:
 - Providing electronic submittal capabilities for Real Estate (abandonment and Right-of-Way license applications)
 - Providing electronic submittal for platting of properties
 - Providing dynamic plan review for the Q-Team to utilize in expedited plan review meetings
 - Provide automated interface between the ProjectDox electronic plan review system and Posse permitting system to eliminate what is currently a manual process.
- SDC will create and issue by December 31, 2020, a Request for Competitive Sealed Proposals (RFCSP) to contract with a consultant to design and implement a self-certification program for engineers and/or architects to obtain building permits with limited staff involvement. This program will still be subject to inspections during and at completion of construction. The scope of work for the project will include a training program for those wishing to self-certify.
- As directed by the City Council during the budget process, the City Manager, through the Human Resources department, is designing a recruitment and

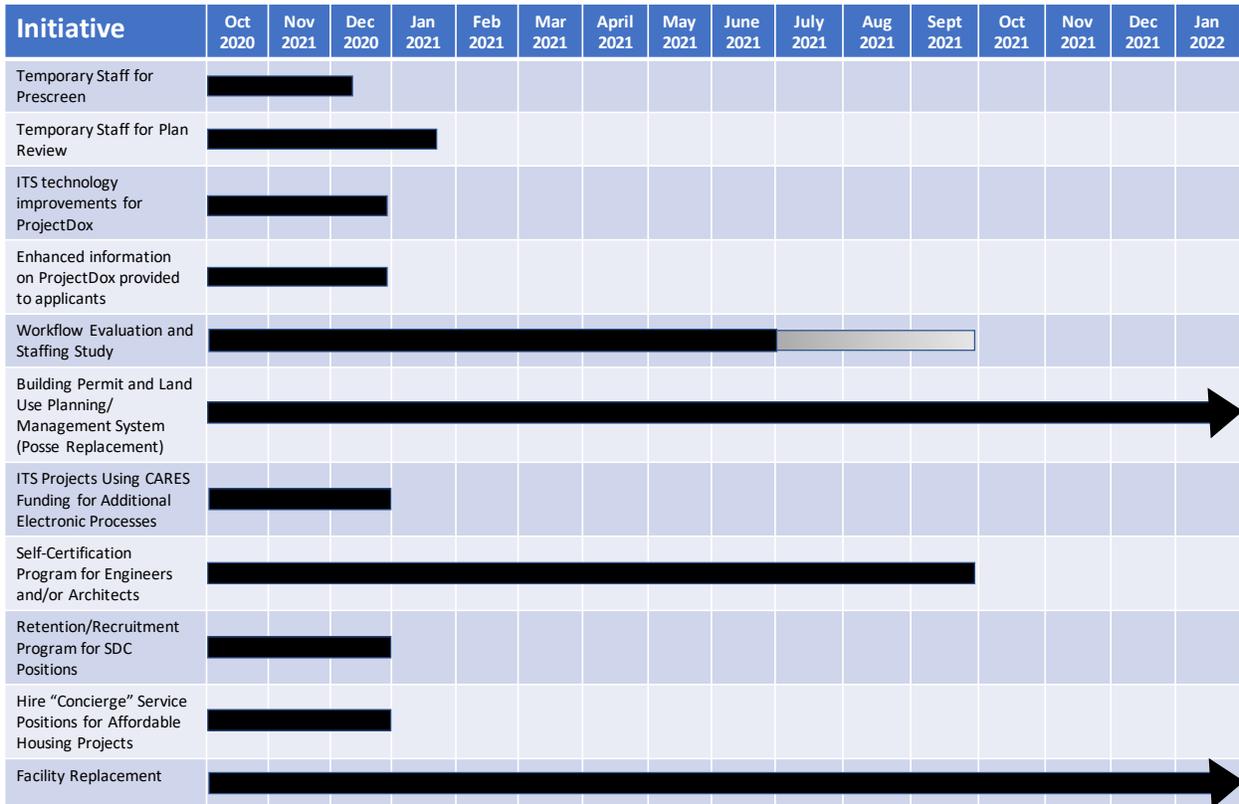
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retention program specifically for SDC positions that are difficult to fill and retain. Recommendations will be provided to City Council for discussion and approval.

- As approved in the FY20-21 budget, two additional Development Project Coordinators are being hired to provide “concierge” services for projects related to mixed income housing developments that are participating in the 1,000-Unit Affordable Housing Challenge or other City Housing programs. These positions were posted and have closed. Civil Service is reviewing candidates. While the positions are being filled, existing SDC staff is meeting with Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization staff to identify best practices for efficient and effective coordination.
- SDC continues to explore avenues to replace the Oak Cliff Municipal Center.

The following timeline overview illustrates the various projects and initiatives as outlined above:



The information provided above reflects the continued dedication of staff to rise to the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors have presented. Thank you for your support as we reimagine and make efficiency improvements with Sustainable Development & Construction.

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Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns.



Dr. Eric A. Johnson
Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Billierae Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion
Directors and Assistant Directors