

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE January 8, 2021

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

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

The information provided below is an update on the enhancements to the permitting process:

Phase I / Prescreen Backlog

When a permit package is submitted, it is reviewed to ensure it is complete for processing. If it is not complete, it is returned to the applicant for re-submission. This is the Prescreen Phase.

- Total number of permit types in the Prescreen Phase combined was 981 on August 18, 2020. As of December 30, 2020, the total number was 292.
- On September 1, 2020, there were 464 Single Family permits in the prescreen stage. As of December 30, 2020, the total was 141 (including 62 awaiting re-submittal from the applicant).
- Four additional staff members were allocated internally and via a third-party contract. They have assisted with prescreening and working through the backlog.

Phase II / Plan Review Backlog

Once a project submission passes Prescreen and the applicant pays initial fees, it moves to Phase II, plan review. When the Prescreen backlog was reduced, the number of complete Prescreen packages were moved into Phase II, creating a backlog in Phase II.

- On October 30, 2020, there were 642 Single Family projects in Phase II. By December 30, 2020, that number had been reduced to 457.
- Phase II / Plan Review has the largest concentration of “backlog” and is the focus of current efforts to re-assign internal staff and supplement with third-party plan review services.

On December 1, 2020 and December 17, 2020, respectively, Senior Plan Examiners were re-assigned to Single Family Plan Review from other internal plan review teams.

As recently as December 30, 2020 we have engaged in discussions with a third-party vendor who has an existing Omnia Partners contract (cooperative purchasing contracts). We are also exploring the use of an Administrative Action (\$70k) to engage external skilled plan reviewers. We are currently working with Procurement to expedite the engagement process.

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Additionally, overtime is currently allowed and being used.

ITS is upgrading computers for all relevant staff. This equipment will have expanded memory and faster processing speeds, to assist with managing large files associated with plan review.

The website now lists processing times for project type at each phase. This is being regularly updated: [Building Inspection](#)

Staff is on track with the previously stated goal of clearing the backlog by the end of the first quarter 2021.

Customer Service

A new Single Family Prescreen process has been implemented to make direct communication with applicants more effective.

- If first Prescreen fails, staff contacts applicant by phone.
- After second and third submission, staff sends a ProjectDox generated email.
- If the application is still not successful after the third attempt, staff reaches out to the applicant again via phone.

Training, reference materials, and instructions on how to properly submit applications are now available on the [Building Inspection website](#) and on the ProjectDox login page: [ProjectDox](#)

Staff will host virtual webinars on the use of the ProjectDox electronic plan review system for project submittals. The following dates are being promoted.

Wednesday, January 13, 2021
2:00p.m.- 4:00p.m.
[Register](#)

Thursday, January 21, 2021
2:00p.m.-4:00p.m.
[Register](#)

Wednesday, January 27, 2021
2:00p.m.-4:00p.m.
[Register](#)

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Videos highlighting the Permit Center, Q-Team, Residential Plan Review, and District Offices are also available for applicants to review: [Building Inspection](#). A ProjectDox Electronic Plan review video is in production. We anticipate posting it by Mid-January.

COVID-19 technology enhancements using CARES Act funding were implemented in late December:

- Electronic submittal and review for Real Estate and Subdivision (platting)
- Dynamic plan review for Q-Team
- Advanced ProjectDox/Posse integration

The advanced interface between ProjectDox and Posse using CARES Act funding resulted in reduced manual steps to transfer information between ProjectDox and Posse. The project will continue through January and uses the existing Building Inspection Fund Balance to further enhance the interface and reduce the manual steps currently required.

Beginning January 11, 2021, Dallas Water Utilities staff will assist with processing Water/Wastewater taps for Single Family Residential projects.

Staff is researching a potential Memorandum of Understanding with large volume single family builders to outline clear expectations for the number of permits that can be processed per week. Staff will work with these builders to identify builder priorities on permits.

Long Term

As adopted in the FY20-21 budget, a third-party Workflow Evaluation and Staffing Study to help determine appropriate staffing levels and additional opportunities for improvements is in procurement.

- Seven proposals received in November 2020.
- A short list with two of the top proposers was compiled.
- Vendor presentations/Q&A held on 12/23/20 and 12/30/20.
- Evaluation voting completed 12/31/20.
- Seek contract approval from City Council in February 2021.

A very large project to replace the backbone permitting system, Posse, is in the procurement stages:

- Proposal evaluations complete and Office of Procurement Services finalized recommendation.
- Department concurrence signed off on 12/22/20.
- Committee briefing and Council agenda item is being scheduled.
- Critical for reviewing the end-to-end processes and determine the long-term technology to support these processes.

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Staff is writing an RFCSP for a third-party vendor to develop a program for engineers and/or architects to self-certify for certain types of permitting. The planned timeline is to issue the RFCSP in February 2021, have proposals due in March 2021, evaluate proposals and negotiate contract in April – May 2021, and seek City Council approval to award a contract in June 2021.

Staff will continue to provide regular updates to the evolution of this process. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Dr. Eric Anthony Johnson with any questions or concerns.



T.C. Broadnax
City Manager

c: Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion
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Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager
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M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services
Directors and Assistant Directors