

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 31, 2023

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Responses to Questions from the March 21, 2023 Government Performance and Financial Management Committee on the Development Services Update**

On March 21, 2023 the Government Performance and Financial Management (GPFM) Committee was briefed on the Development Services (DSD) update. The following information as further clarifications, corrections, and answers to questions provided by City Council Members.

**Question 1: The February statistic for single-family permit approvals was down from 32 to 27 days and 99% of the single-family permits were issued in 15 days. Those seem to be inconsistent. What are the statistics for those applications that were submitted in February that are not old permits from prior months?**

The median number of days during City staff time for all new single-family permits decreased from 32 calendar days in January 2023 to 27 days in February 2023. This represents a 5 median day decrease for all permits issued in the month. This is the lowest it has been in the last 29 months. This is a cumulative number of all permits issued in February and may include older permits received in the previous months. The department performed all initial reviews within 15 days regardless if the permit was issued or not. This departmental performance goal is set to ensure staff are processing and reviewing permits on a timely and consistent basis. This 15-day goal provides customers with a level of predictability and assurance the City is processing their permits in a timely fashion.

In February 2023, all new single-family permits submitted that did not require customer revisions were issued in 9 median days. Of all the new single-family permits submitted for the month of February, 99% of the initial reviews were performed within the department's 15-day performance goal. The department is carefully monitoring the initial time it takes to perform the first round of reviews and is considering lowering the 15-day goal to 10 days in FY 2023-2024. This progressive approach will propel the department towards meeting the City's goal of 5 days.

**Question 2: The number reported for 'Commercial Remodel' last year was 1,499 and the number reported for this year is 1,508 and the 'All Commercial Projects' reported does not add up, please clarify.**

The number reported for "Commercial Remodel" last year was based on the Posse record type "Building Projects" which proved to be significantly lower than the true volume. Staff revised the methodology to improve accuracy by targeting the Posse record type "Master Permit." The previous fiscal year's numbers have been updated accordingly in Exhibit A (Attached) to reflect the new methodology.

The “All Commercial Projects” line of the entitled section “# of Commercial Plan Review Re-Submittals” is meant to sum the total number of cycle 2+ reviews that occurred in a given month.

Staff is proactively working with Data Analytics and Business Intelligence (DBI) to develop a commercial dashboard, similar to the [residential dashboard](#) for the website.

**Question 3: Are we looking at privatizing opportunities for fire suppression delays in some of these areas?**

Currently the third-party reviewers mandate a fire protection engineer to review fire suppression systems. Staff is working with the third-party vendors to explore additional efficiency measures. One option is exploring fire plans examiners. This will make it easier for the third-party vendor to find and secure appropriately certified and licensed professionals, not having to be a fire protection engineer.

In addition, staff is exploring the electronic option for all fire protection contractors. This was not built into ProjectDox. Staff will continue to move forward and strategize on how to receive submittals of fire protection projects from contractors electronically, saving time and delays due to the back-and-forth between the City, the contractor, and the third-party vendor.

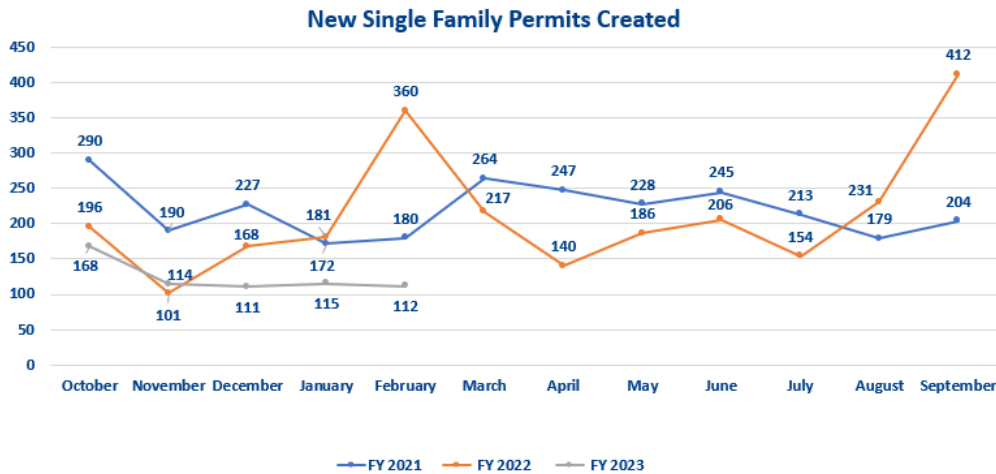
**Question 4: In Fiscal Year 2021-2022, ‘Commercial New’ was reported at 1,343 permits, and this Fiscal Year a reported total of 46 permits from October 2022 to February 2023. This is a massive difference from last Fiscal Year to this Fiscal Year.**

In the prior fiscal year, the “Commercial New” and “Commercial Addition” subcategories were reported together and used a method that targeted the Posse record type “Master Permits.” Staff has since corrected last year’s numbers in Exhibit A to reflect each individual metric and applied a more accurate methodology using the Posse record type “Building Projects.” “Building Projects” are a more accurate record type for this metric as all “Commercial New” and “Commercial Addition” permits have a single “Building Project.”

**Question 5: The single-family residential permits was reported at 112 created in the month of February and only 72 were issued.**

The below graph and the section on the right reports a correction to the number of permits issued. In February 2023, the total number of new single-family permits submitted decreased from 115 to 112 from the previous month.

However, the department continues to issue more permits than those coming in each month. This continues to be a consistent trend. The department issued **172** new single-family permits for the month of February. This represents 53% more permits issued than those submitted by customers. The reference to **72** was a misspoken error.



**A total of 112 permits were processed for the month.**

**172 permits were issued for the month.**

**Question 6: Of the 172 new single-family permits issued for the month of February, how many were processed by third-party reviewers versus in-house?**

The third-party vendor does not process permits. They review and plan check new single-family projects for minimum compliance. The third-party vendor performed 26 reviews in assisting the department in the month of February 2023.

**Question 7: Are you working with Budget Office to make sure we're on track that our staffing will match our needs?**

Yes, the Budget Team and other City departments continue to be extremely supportive and responsive to DSD needs. Staff have scheduled ongoing meetings and working sessions to ensure the department is strategically meeting customer needs.

**Question 8: Are you finding that given your staffing situation, are we going to have a massive increase in fees for permits when we try to do full-cost recovery? And this is an area we always do cost recovery?**

The department is currently working with a professional consultant to evaluate our permit fees and they will be providing recommendations. The department and services delivered are 100% cost recovery based.

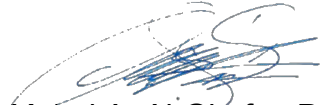
**Question 9: Are we asking our third-party review teams to look at the following issues causing delays: fire suppression, engineering processing, Dallas Water Utilities, legal analysis, and the real estate offices?**

Currently the department outsources fire, water, drainage, and when needed legal aid (through the City Attorney's Office) reviews to third-party vendors. The department does not utilize a third-party for real estate services.

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DSD is scheduled to present the “Development Services Monthly Technology and Metrics Review” briefing at the April 3, 2023, Economic Development Committee and a more comprehensive report will be provided at the next GPFM Committee meeting on April 24, 2023.

Should you have any questions please contact Andrew Espinoza, Director/Chief Building Official of Development Services at (214) 542-1227 or [andres.espinoza@dallas.gov](mailto:andres.espinoza@dallas.gov).



Majed A. Al-Ghafry, P.E.  
Assistant City Manager

**[Attachment: Exhibit A – Commercial Plan Review Metrics]**

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Tammy Palomino, Interim City Attorney  
Mark Swann, City Auditor  
Billerae Johnson, City Secretary  
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge  
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Deputy City Manager  
Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager

M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager  
Dr. Robert Perez, Assistant City Manager  
Carl Simpson, Assistant City Manager  
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer  
Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff to the City Manager  
Directors and Assistant Directors

**Exhibit A  
Commercial Plan Review Metrics**

Dallas Development Services Department Performance Goals FY2022-2023			2022			2023		
Metrics	Goal	FY21-22	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	YTD
<b># of Commercial Plan Review Submittals</b>								
Commercial New	N/A	<b>171</b>	11	10	6	8	11	<b>46</b>
Commercial Additions	N/A	<b>156</b>	19	17	28	16	33	<b>113</b>
Commerical Remodels	N/A	<b>4,179</b>	281	247	404	281	295	<b>1,508</b>
Express Plan Review (Q-Team)	N/A	<b>842</b>	23	16	20	23	22	<b>104</b>
Express Plan Review Minor Commercial (Q-Team 2)	N/A	<b>N/A</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	14	<b>14</b>
<b>Average # of Days for Initial Review</b>								
New Commercial/Remodels	15 Days	<b>12</b>	10	10	11	10	9	<b>10</b>
Express Plan Review (Q-Team)	15 Days	<b>7</b>	5	5	2	3	2	<b>3</b>
Express Plan Review Minor Commercial (Q-Team 2)	15 Days	<b>N/A</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Average # of Days Commercial Re-Submitted Reviews</b>								
New Commercial/Remodels	7 Days	<b>13</b>	11	10	12	12	11	<b>11</b>
Express Plan Review (Q-Team)	7 Days	<b>6</b>	1	1	1	1	1	<b>1</b>
Express Plan Review Minor Commercial (Q-Team 2)	7 Days	<b>N/A</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	<b>1</b>
<b># of Commercial Plan Review Re-Submittals</b>								
All Commercial Projects	N/A	<b>3,661</b>	87	72	72	104	92	<b>427</b>
<b>Together We Are Building a Safe and United Dallas!</b>								