

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE August 2, 2024

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Planning and Development Department Updates**

On June 21, Interim City Manager Kimberly Tolbert announced the creation of the Planning and Development Department. In that announcement, ICM Tolbert outlined next steps including naming interim assistant directors, posting the positions for permanent hiring no later than July 31, and updating the department organizational chart, contact information, branding, and online presence. All of these next steps have been completed.

I am excited to announce the appointment of the new interim assistant directors for the Planning and Development Department. An updated executive organizational chart is also included below. Each candidate has a wealth of experience and knowledge. More importantly, however, I spoke with each interim assistant director individually and have their commitment to act as problem solvers and change agents in these new roles.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT Director (Emily Liu)						
Deputy Director - Planning and Chief Planning Officer (Andrea Gilles)	Deputy Director - Zoning (Andreea Udrea)	Deputy Director (I) - Permitting and Chief Building Official (Sam Eskander)			Deputy Director - Customer and Team Excellence (Vernon Young)	
AD - Planning (Arturo Castillo)	AD (I) - Zoning Code (Megan Wimer)	AD (I) - Residential Permitting (Willie Franklin)	AD (I) - Commercial Permitting (Linda V. Rivera Vélez)	AD (I) - Inspections (David Session)	AD (I) - Team Excellence (Teresa Bateman)	AD (I) - Customer Experience (Jason Pool)
Long Range Planning, Forward Dallas, Area Plans, Neighborhood Planning, Authorized Hearings, CLUP, Historic Preservation, Conservation Districts, Urban Design, UDPRP, Landmark Commission	Zoning requests, special zoning projects, Subdivision and Platting, Public Hearings, CPC, ZOAC, Annexes, Street Name Changes, Code Amendments, Land Use Termination Cases, Board of Adjustment, Landscaping Review/Arborist, Signs, Zoning Interpretation	Residential Permitting, including RSVP program. This division will also oversee all minor permit reviews.	Commercial Permitting, including Q Team and the new pre-development process to be implemented through the cross departmental review process.	Inspections, including all inspectors for zoning, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, water/waste water, building inspection, health, etc.	Budget, HR, IT, Fee Collection, staff training, procurement, fleet and equipment, GIS and data, process and policy, innovation	Records management, open records, call center, external training, marketing and outreach, VIP/ Escalation/ Concierge services

**Interim Assistant Director of Zoning: Megan Wimer**

Megan Wimer has 22 years of diverse planning and zoning experience, with nearly 17 years dedicated to the City of Dallas. She began her career with the City as a Senior Planner, advancing to Chief Planner and then to Assistant Building Official overseeing all zoning functions of permitting. Megan currently serves as a Service Area Planning Manager in the Planning and Development Department overseeing the Code Amendments and Authorized Hearings teams. She holds a bachelor's degree in geography from University of Arkansas and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. Additionally, she is a certified building official by the International Code Council.

**Interim Assistant Director of Commercial Permitting: Linda V. Rivera Vélez**

Linda V. Rivera Vélez has over 15 years of experience in the environmental and civil engineering fields. She started with the City of Dallas in 2018 as an Engineer Assistant and was quickly promoted to Engineer I, Engineer II, and Engineer Program Administrator. Linda holds both a master's and a bachelor's degrees in environmental engineering from Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico. She is a licensed professional engineer in the State of Texas and is committed to serve Dallas residents with excellence and professionalism.

**Interim Assistant Director of Residential Permitting: Willie Franklin**

Willie Franklin has over 10 years of professional experience, guiding teams, projects, and programs to positive outcomes. He currently serves as a Chief Planner in the Planning and Development Department. Willie holds a master's degree in community development and a bachelor's degree in arts of mass communications from Prairie View A&M University.

**Interim Assistant Director of Inspections: David Session**

David Session has worked for the City of Dallas for over 35 years, holding various positions in the Building Inspections Division including field inspections and both residential and commercial review teams. He has led numerous code amendment efforts and is considered the City's expert on building codes. He currently serves as an Assistant Building Official in the Planning and Development Department.

**Interim Assistant Director of Team Excellence: Teresa Bateman**

Teresa Bateman has over 30 years of experience in budgeting, business, and public administration. She has been with the City of Dallas for nearly 20 years and currently serves as the Business Manager in the Planning and Development Department. Teresa holds a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in political science, both from the University of Texas at Arlington.

DATE August 2, 2024  
SUBJECT **New organizational structure: Planning and Development Department**  
PAGE **3 of 3**

**Interim Assistant Director Customer Experience: Jason Pool**

Jason Pool currently serves as a Development Services Administrator in the Planning and Development Department, overseeing the teams for zoning plan review, zoning consultations, zoning enforcement, subdivision, arborists, signs, and the Board of Adjustment. Jason began his career with the City of Dallas as a sign inspector in 2017 and has progressed through roles including Senior Planner, Development Manager, and Administrator. He holds a bachelor's degree in graphic design from Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Each of these six positions has also been posted through the Human Resources and a national search will be conducted to hire permanent candidates for each role.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Emily Liu, Director at 469-990-8069 or [yu.liu@dallas.gov](mailto:yu.liu@dallas.gov)



**Robin Bentley,  
Assistant City Manager (I)**

c: Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert City Manager (I)  
Tammy Palomino, City Attorney  
Mark Swann, City Auditor  
Billerae Johnson, City Secretary  
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge  
Dominique Artis, Chief of Public Safety (I)  
Dev Rastogi, Assistant City Manager

M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager  
Alina Ciocan, Assistant City Manager  
Donzell Gipson, Assistant City Manager (I)  
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer  
Elizabeth Saab, Chief of Strategy, Engagement, and Alignment (I)  
Directors and Assistant Directors