

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE May 6, 2022

TO The Honorable Mayor and Members of the Dallas City Council

SUBJECT **Responses to Questions Related to the Development Services Review Update**

Below are the responses to the questions raised by Council Member (CM) Blackmon regarding the Development Services Review Update briefing presented to the Economic Development Committee (EDC) on May 2, 2022.

**1. What stakeholder engagement was done prior to this briefing? And what stakeholder engagement will be done leading into May 18, 2022 City Council Briefing?**

Staff mirrored the approach and process for previous City Council Committee meetings and wanted to engage with the City Manager and City Committee Members before reaching out to the stakeholders. Staff is preparing a notification to be released to the stakeholders by Monday, May 9, 2022 to direct them to the May 2, 2022 EDC meeting presentation documents and video in order to seek additional comments or concerns.

In addition, the Assistant City Manager met with the Dallas Builders Association on April 7, 2022 to present action items and solicit their feedback. The feedback shared at that meeting was incorporated into the presentation made on May 2, 2022.

**2. When will the additional 3rd party reviewer come to City Council for consideration?**

The plan is for the City Manager to approve an Administrative Action item of up to \$100,000.00 for the selected vendor to begin work in two weeks, with the goal of presenting an Agenda item to the City Council to approve the full-service amount for the entire year. This will be presented in June 2022.

**3. Will this proposed plan be implemented at once or will it be in stages? Does the City have enough resources to implement this plan? What is the expected timeline for completing each task? How frequently will staff be reporting their progress to the City Council and which Committee do they intend to do this?**

There has not been a plan created to date. There have been action items identified with responsible team members and specific delivery dates. Those items may serve as the foundational pieces of a future plan, along with the Matrix Consulting Group study recommendations.

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**4. How will City Council and the Development Advisory Committee be updated and how will the proposed planned be memorialized?**

Staff will reinstate and hold monthly meetings with the Development Advisory Committee and will coordinate communication, activities, and future action items with the Chairs of the EDC and the Government Performance and Finance Management Committees while partnering with CM Blackmon and the Mayors Task Force group.

**5. Can you discuss what a self-certification program could look like? Is a late Fall 2022 timeline realistic? The understanding is that this program could be potentially utilized for single family remodels (for spaces not changing the use). But this says multi-story buildings. Who is recommending this?**

Staff welcomes the opportunity to partner with the Development Advisory Committee in gathering data relating to other municipalities' practices. Staff will update the EDC Committee on the progress in August of 2022.

**6. FROM THE BRIEFING – is this timeline realistic? What Committee will this go through? What stakeholder engagement will be done to rewrite the entire development code? How will PDs be handled?**

The timeline is realistic once the contract is approved. Staff are proposing to update sections of the development code incrementally and concurrently (e.g., residential, industrial, etc.) so immediate benefits and changes of the rewrite in priority areas can be seen. Note that this timeline is only for a full rewrite of the Chapter 51 and 51A, and not inclusive of the future effort to apply the new development code in response to the ForwardDallas recommendations. Staff recommends PDs be handled with the ForwardDallas rezoning recommendations, since they are not contained within Chapter 51 and 51A. The code rewrite will go through the established ZOAC and CPC process, which does include public outreach to neighborhoods and industry stakeholders.

**a. *Need to re-write the Dallas Development Codes (Chapter 51 and 51A):* A full rewrite of the development codes (including the sections that regulate the subdivision process among others). This is also an outcome of the ForwardDallas land use plan.**

**b. Staff is preparing to present to the City Manager and City Council to begin this effort. Timeline: 12-18 months**

**7. Can you discuss the trouble shooting occurring with IT? How is the City's in-house IT department helping resolve the longstanding cloud storage issues and software updates? Who is overseeing this project?**

Staff is working to upgrade the current ProjectDox software to the 9.2 version. The change will allow the system to be housed in the cloud, and staff from IT and Development Services (DEV) will bring the system online in June 2022.

**8. Can you explain what the Chief Building Official does, how long the position has remained vacant and where the city is in hiring this position?**

As outlined in Chapter 52: Administrative Procedures for the Construction Codes, the Chief Building Official shall be in administrative and operational charge of the division of building inspection. The position has remained vacant since May 2020. However, an interim Chief Building Official was appointed in early Summer 2020. The City Manager is in the final stages of selecting a Chief Building Official. An announcement of the selection will be made within the next few weeks.

**9. It's taking 2 months to hire someone. What is the City doing to create a more efficient Civil Service/HR hiring system? Is this 2-month timeline impacting other departments as well?**

The hiring process has vastly improved since Deputy City Manager Jon Fortune has engaged with Civil Service, Human Resources, and the DEV management team. This has streamlined the hiring process better and resulted in improving the timeline to two months instead of the previous three-to-five-month process.

**10. How much money is left out of the \$5M authorization that City Council approved for 3rd party reviewers? Will there be an additional appropriation for this new 3rd party reviewer?**

Please see the chart below:

Vendor	Budgeted	Invoices Paid	Remaining Encumbrance	Total Expenses ITD	Future Budget
Safebuilt, LLC	\$ 1,730,000.00	\$ 717,600.00	\$ 383,750.00	\$ 1,101,350.00	\$ 628,650.00
MetroCode	\$ 1,680,000.00	\$ 139,955.00	\$ 7,100.00	\$ 147,055.00	\$ 1,532,945.00
StanTec	\$ 1,680,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,680,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,090,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 857,555.00</b>	<b>\$ 390,850.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,248,405.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,841,595.00</b>

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**11. What performance metrics are being tracked and when will the public have access to such metrics? Is this work being done in-house?**

Although some performance metrics are tracked, the only one that has been shared is the residential review permits and performance timelines. DEV will launch a new quarterly performance report by June 2022 and will track metrics in priority areas for internal and external stakeholders. This will include:

- Permit review & issuance timing,
- Permit application & issuance volume,
- Inspection responsiveness,
- Customer service efficiency, and
- Cross-departmental coordination.

**12. What is the status on updating the website to provide more easily understandable resources for customers? Does Development Services have the resources to manage this project?**

Staff is looking to partner with Matrix Consulting Group and HR&A Advisors to revamp the department's website. This will be a comprehensive effort that will continue to be ongoing.

**13. Where does the Q Team fit into this plan?**

Staff is working to initiate the activities of a second Q Team which will assist in commercial and residential permits on an expedited basis. The timeline to initiate and train a second team will be a six-month period.

**14. What customer service initiatives are underway and similarly what employee recognition programs is the dept doing?**

Assistant Director, Vernon Young, has just been placed over frontline staff in the permit center, call center, and ProjectDox areas. Staff is creating a comprehensive training initiative for customer service and ProjectDox. This effort will be ongoing.

**15. How does the Toyota Call Center study tie into the call center and customer service improvements?**

Toyota only looked at the call center and there have been multiple changes since they worked with staff. Their scope did not include overall customer service. It is the responsibility and the task of the department to initiate comprehensive customer service training for the call center and the entire department.

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**16. How is the City Manager's Office bringing stakeholders folks to the table, to gain their feedback and to provide a feedback loop on their concerns?**

Please refer to the answers of questions number 1 and 4. In addition, the department will create a link for stakeholders to provide continuous feedback to improve the department on processes and customer service.

**17. The forum for internal and external stakeholders to communicate should already be occurring frequently. Is it? If not, why not and when this is implemented - how frequently will this group meet and who will be in it?**

Please refer to the answers of questions number 1, 4, and 16.

Should you have any questions, please contact Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager at (214) 671-7827 or [majed.al-ghafry@dallascityhall.com](mailto:majed.al-ghafry@dallascityhall.com) or Will Munding, Executive in Residence of Development Services at (214) 671-9293 or [william.munding@dallascityhall.com](mailto:william.munding@dallascityhall.com).



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