



City of Dallas

Development Services Review Update

**Economic Development
Committee
May 2, 2022**

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Development Services
City of Dallas

Presentation Overview



- Background
- Current Status
- Specific Challenges, Current and Future Improvements
 1. Technology Issues (ProjectDox, POSSE, New Land Use Software)
 - Training
 2. HR Issues
 3. Data Metric and Webpage
 4. Permitting and Third-Party Reviewers
 5. Call Center and Customer Service
 - Communication Effort
 - Training
- Draft Efficiency Study by Matrix Consulting Group, April 2022
- Other Considerations
- Next Steps



Background



- Development Services presented permitting updates to the Economic Development Committee (EDC) on February 1, 2021
- The Chief Economic Development Officer then presented a department update to EDC on October 4, 2021
- The 10/4/2021 identified several upcoming enhancements. No timeline was presented.



Background (Continued)



The upcoming enhancements included:

- Proposed Chapter 52 Amendments (Completed)
- Permitting Software upgrade (In Progress)
- Metrics (Under Development)
- Building Inspection Call Center Improvements (Under Development)
- Leadership Recruitment (In Progress)
- Training and Talent Support Program (Under Development)
- Self Certification (Not Started)



Current Status



- Development Services continues to be inundated with Residential and Commercial permits that have been taking significant time to process
- This is due to several factors including:
 1. The pandemic of COVID-19 causing loss of staff and teams working remotely
 2. Complicated permitting process with many loopholes
 3. Integration of new permitting software without much support for troubleshooting and training
 4. Permit counts fluctuate from month to month
 5. Submittals have been sub-par in some instances making cycle reviews longer



Current Status (Cont.)



- Several operations are impacted including:
 1. Technology
 2. Human Resources
 3. Data integration and performance metrics
 4. Call center and customer service
 5. Communication
 6. Workflow and plan submittal/intake
 7. Follow through on permitting status
- All are operational issues that need to be addressed by the administrative management team



Specific Challenges: Technology



- **Four issues staff is dealing with:**
 1. The existing ProjectDox 9.1 software issues relating to intake, notification, and accessibility
 2. Updating to the new ProjectDox 9.2 software and user testing
 3. Replacing the outdated POSSE land use software with a new platform
 4. Training for ProjectDox for internal and external users



Specific Challenges: Technology (Cont.)



- **Staff's Actions To Date:**

1. Created a working group with Development Services and IT to address issues
2. Met with ProjectDox developer, Avolve, to fix bugs and explore integrating vendor staff into the department's technical support
3. Staff also evaluated the preferred vendor to replace the current POSSE land use system



Specific Challenges: Technology (Cont.)



- **Future Actions, Timelines, and Responsible Lead:**

1. User testing activity of updated version of ProjectDox 9.2 (May 2022)
2. Hire Gartner to evaluate proposal by preferred vendor to replace the POSSE system (May 2022)
3. Recommend to City Council a preferred vendor to replace the POSSE system (June 2022)
4. Create in-house technology support system that is dedicated to resolve technology issues moving forward (June 2022)
5. Create a timeline for system integration for the POSSE replacement system

- **Lead Staff: Irma Hayes and Javier Ramon**



Specific Challenges: HR



- **Six issues staff is dealing with:**
 1. Vacant top Executive positions
 2. Time it takes to hire and onboard new staff
 3. Lack of qualified applicant pool
 4. Lower than market compensation for skilled positions
 5. Competitive market for skilled services
 6. Workload and expectations



Specific Challenges: HR (Cont.)



- **Staff's Actions to Date:**

1. Streamlined the process among Civil Service, HR, and the hiring department to select and onboard candidates in a timely fashion
2. Currently a 2-month process, ideally it will operate in six to eight weeks from NeoGov-Open Hire to NeoGov-Hiring Request

- Of the 41 vacant positions in February 2022, 23 have been filled

	PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3	PRIORITY 4	TOTAL OPEN POSITIONS
Open positions as of February 17, 2022	5	5	17	14	41
Open positions as of April 27, 2022	1	4	5	5	15
Positions Filled	4	1	12	9	26 total filled



Specific Challenges: HR (Cont.)



- **Future Actions, Timelines, and Responsible Lead:**
 1. Fill top Executive positions (May 2022)
 2. Continue with the effort of filling the remaining vacant positions (Ongoing)
 3. Add a third third-party reviewer to continue assisting staff with the workload (May 2022)
 4. Work with HR and Matrix Consulting Group to conduct compensation study indicative of market compensation for skilled staff (July 2022)
- **Lead Staff:** Will Munding and Natasha Wade



Specific Challenges: Data Metrics and Webpage



- **Four issues staff is dealing with:**
 1. Inconsistent reporting or lack of reporting of key measures
 2. Certain operations are not tracked and/or utilized
 3. Navigating the department webpage is cumbersome and permit requirement flowchart is complex with little clarification to navigate
 4. Metrics are not transparent (not reported on the department webpage)



Specific Challenges: Data Metrics and Webpage (Cont.)



• Staff's Actions To Date:

1. Provided reporting for the number of residential permits and the time it takes to process
2. Tracked and compared permitting activities from year to year

	1 ST QUARTER 2022			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
SFR	181	357	217	755
	4 TH QUARTER 2021			
	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
SFR	196	101	168	465

DIFFERENCE OF 290



Specific Challenges: Data Metrics and Webpage (Cont.)



- **Future Actions, Timelines, and Responsible Lead:**
 1. Initiate an overhaul of the departments website to include performance metrics, easy-to-navigate process flowcharts, and transparent reporting (Ongoing)
 2. Provide monthly updates on all permits to the City Manager and elected officials (June 2022)
- Lead Staff: Kevin Delgado and Victor Cadungog



Specific Challenges: Permitting & Third-Party Reviewers



- **Five issues staff is dealing with:**
 1. Electronic submittals outpace staff resources and capabilities
 2. Inconsistent intake and exchange activity between staff and third-party reviewers
 3. Finding a replacement for an underperforming third-party reviewer
 4. Vendors are suited best to review plans and code, as zoning reviews are more difficult to complete
 5. Evaluating vendors' capacity to expand services into commercial and special projects



Specific Challenges: Permitting & Third-Party Reviewers (Cont.)



- **Staff's Actions To Date:**

1. Conducted weekly meeting with third-party reviewers to understand scope capacity and to establish enhanced communication and monitoring of the workflow
2. Intake and hand-off process with the third-party reviewers has improved
3. Staff has done a more comprehensive job of monitoring production



Specific Challenges:

Permitting & Third-Party Reviewers (Cont.)



- **Future Actions, Timelines, and Responsible Lead:**

1. Acquire the services of a third vendor to review permits (May 2022)
2. Dedicate additional staff to work on zoning review (May 2022)
3. Continue to evaluate vendors ability to provide additional specialty services such as large commercial projects, DISD projects, affordable housing projects among others (Ongoing)
4. Explore the creation of a Self-Certification program for minor permits (September 2022)

- **Lead Staff: Will Munding and Willie Franklin**



Specific Challenges: Call Center and Customer Service



- **Five issues staff is dealing with:**
 1. Customers complain that staff is not available in-person to answer questions or follow up on permits
 2. To add, pre-permit submittal consulting and guidance is no longer available
 3. Calls or requests are not returned or responded to by staff in a timely manner
 4. Assisting in digital onboarding is missing in most cases
 5. Frustration from customers and staff



Specific Challenges: Call Center and Customer Service (Cont.)



- **Staff's Actions to Date:**

1. Change are made in OCMC leadership with a focus on customer service
2. Improved the intake process by shifting staff to handle and better communicate with third-party reviewers
3. Delegated authority to senior department staff to evaluate and adjust process to improve service



Specific Challenges: Call Center and Customer Service (Cont.)



- **Future Actions, Timelines, and Responsible Lead:**

1. Customer service training (May 2022)
2. ProjectDox training for internal and external stakeholders (June/July 2022)
3. Increase and train staff in the call center to effectively handle the volume of calls (June/July 2022)
4. Improve the comprehensive project requirements checklist (July 2022)
5. Enhance the quality of submittals through pre-submittal staff and through clear website instructions (September 2022)

- Lead Staff: Vernon Young, Harim Perez, Carolina Yumet, and Irma Hayes



Specific Challenges: Communication



- **Four issues staff is dealing with:**
 1. Lack of communication among the divisions and with the outside world
 2. No live updates when new processes or procedures are implemented or enacted
 3. Lack of communication on issues encountered with customers
 4. ProjectDox, among other technology issues are not communicated to internal and external stakeholders



Specific Challenges: Communication (Cont.)



- **Staff's Actions to Date:**

1. Provided bi-weekly update memos to the City Council
2. Presented to Government Performance and Financial Management (GPFM) Committee on a monthly basis



Specific Challenges: Communication (Cont.)



- **Future Actions, Timelines, and Responsible Lead:**
 1. Hire a communications manager to provide for daily communications on department activities (May 2022)
 2. Provide updates on technology improvements instantaneously (May 2022)
 3. Provide a forum for internal and external stakeholders to communicate and share issues with the department for further action (June 2022)
- Lead Staff: Candidate has been identified



Draft Efficiency Study Findings



- Matrix Consulting Group was awarded a Sustainable Development and Construction Department (SDC) Workflow Evaluation and Staffing Study in early 2021.
- The Consultant has completed a draft study and staff is currently reviewing.
- Highlighted findings include:
 1. Create position of Land Management Software System Administrator
 2. Redesign department webpages to create a one-stop development portal



Draft Efficiency Study Findings (Continued)



4. Create dashboard to present performance data for department
5. Establish performance timelines for processing development review applications
6. Re-organize structure to create dedicated residential and commercial teams, move subdivision team to engineering, and move pre-application team to Strategic Business Unit



Draft Efficiency Study Findings (Continued)



7. Fill recommended positions as outlined in report
8. Create pre-application team
9. Develop training protocol / materials for staff with a focus on both technical training required and implementation of overall customer service training for all staff
10. Conduct market compensation study for key positions in department



Other Considerations



Self Certification:

- The Self-Certification Program allows a registered professional to take responsibility for and certify a project's compliance with building code, standards and ordinances.
- Examples of eligible permits can include multi-story buildings, landscape and parking lot plans by landscape architects, and grading and drainage and parking lot plans by civil engineers.
- Staff will explore this program further as other cities are utilizing this model with success.
- Timeline: Late Fall 2022.



Other Considerations (Continued)



Planning and Urban Design Unified Development Code:

- The Dallas Development Codes and processes haven't been meaningfully updated since the late 1980s
- Re-zonings are triggered on nearly every property that is developed
- As developments progress through to the building permit stage, the excessive customization of the parcel-by-parcel zoning, leads to **significant delays and errors in permitting**
- *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.
- Staff is preparing to present to the City Manager and City Council to begin this effort. Timeline: 12-18 months



Next Steps



- Provide update to the City Council on May 18, 2022
- Review, finalize, and implement suggested changes by the Matrix Consulting Group





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