



August 13, 2021

Re: Proposed Solutions for Sustainable Development and Construction

Dear Dr. Johnson,

Thank you for your time to discuss the ongoing permitting challenges and operational issues with Sustainable Development and Construction (SDC). After marginal improvements in the spring with the introduction of third-party plan reviewers, the permitting situation has deteriorated again. Review times are routinely exceeding 6 weeks, calls and emails to city staff go unanswered and the ProjectDox system continues to be plagued by technical problems and overly cumbersome submittal requirements that are modified without notice or reason.

Since the start of the pandemic the overall metroplex has increased permitting by 27%. Fort Worth is up 30% and Dallas is down 14%. Had Dallas permitted at the same rate as the rest of the region, our city would have 750 more homes and \$336 million more in tax base. This situation gets more costly each month and it is forcing builders to consider business in other cities.

After 17 months of challenges caused by underlying issues years in the making, I think we all understand the importance and immediacy for change. We need solutions now, but we also appreciate that they will take time to fully implement. These solutions should include:

- Establish a direct third-party plan review and prescreen option for single-family residential new construction and remodeling. Specifically, applicants should be able to choose from and contract directly with qualified reviewers in the private sector. These could include, but not necessarily be limited to, the companies already assisting with this process. Currently, the workload and reviews performed by third parties are assigned by city staff creating unnecessary duplication of tasks and adding to staff's already-taxing workload.
 - We want to make two things very clear on this solution:
 - The intent of this is to supplement and not replace city staff. Applicants could still choose to work with city plan reviewers.
 - This initiative does not need to extend to building inspections. Unlike plan review and prescreen, field inspectors have consistently performed their work efficiently and effectively.
- Provide responsive and professional customer service to every applicant. Every applicant should receive a helpful answer to their question within one business day. Help should be available to those unfamiliar with the submittal process over the phone and in person.
- Reconstitute the online permitting system. The deployment of ProjectDox has created countless frustrations for applicants and city staff. The problems with the system were foreseeable and were identified by the Dallas BA in 2018 and 2019. The replacement system needs to be built with user experience, on both sides of the counter, being the top priority.
- Implementation of key performance indicators proposed by the Dallas BA, TREC and TEXO in the attached memo sent at the request of Mayor Pro Tem West in July. This

should include surveying every permit applicant, upon approval, regarding their experience with the process and customer service.

- Expand and implement the self-certification initiative authorized by the last council. This allows qualified third-party entities to review items incidental to the construction and development process. Examples include geotechnical engineers reviewing and approving foundation designs and landscape architects doing the same for the landscaping and tree ordinance (Article X). A similar model already exists for the energy code and green building ordinance.
- Permanently fill the chief building official position. Ideally, this individual will have private and public sector experience. The budget should accommodate competitive pay for this position as it is key to the success of SDC.
- Elevate the standing of the Development Advisory Committee so key industry stakeholders can vet policy proposals and set and monitor Key Performance Indicators including customer service surveys. Fort Worth is a good example to follow here.
- Prepare the department for further changes recommended by the staffing and efficiency study being conducted by Matrix Consulting.

Thank you for your leadership of our city and for helping us solve this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Crone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Phil Crone, Executive Officer
Dallas Builders Association

TO: Chad West, Mayor Pro Tem
FROM: Steering Committee of Development Services Advisory Committee
DATE: July 15, 2021
RE: Proposed key performance indicators for development services

As the City of Dallas makes progress to reduce its permitting backlog for both residential and commercial construction, it would be helpful to track the city’s goals and current metrics in a monthly report. This report will enable the City of Dallas and its stakeholders to maintain the progress and advance our collective goals.

As an example, the City of Fort Worth has implemented a simple monthly report that can be used as a model for Dallas. The report can be shared monthly with City Council, the Development Advisory Committee, and other key stakeholders.

This report was originally proposed to city staff in April. It has since been amended to include desired performance outcomes for certain key measures. The steering committee of the Development Advisory Committee recommends the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

Overview

	Current Month	Prior Month	Prior Year
Total commercial valuation (incl remodels & additions)			
New commercial permits issued			
New single-family permits issued			
New commercial permit apps received			
New commercial & new single-family permits issued			
New single-family residential apps received			
Number of Completed Customer Service Surveys Received			

Q Team

Performance	Current Month	Prior Month	Prior Year	Goal
Time to Review				3-8 weeks based on fee paid with every project receiving a projected date for permit issuance
Workload	Current Month	Prior Month	Prior Year	
Q Team Applications Received				

Conferences Held			
Building Permits Issued			

New Commercial Building Permits

Performance	Current Month	Prior Month	Prior Year	Goal
Average time from opened date to issued permit				4 weeks
Days to First Review				1 week
Average response time to email and phone inquiries				1 business day
Workload	Current Month	Prior Month	Prior Year	
Number of applicant inquiries received by staff via email				
Number of applicant inquiries received by staff via phone				
Total Number of Permits				
Number of Permits reviewed by 3 rd Party				

New Single Family Residential Building Permits

Performance	Current Month	Prior Month	Prior Year	Goal
Average time from opened date to issued permit				2 weeks
Days to First Review				1 week
Average response time to email and phone inquiries				1 business day
Workload	Current Month	Prior Month	Prior Year	
Number of applicant inquiries received by staff via email				
Number of applicant inquiries received by staff via phone				
Total Number of Permits				
Number of Permits reviewed by 3 rd Party				

In addition to the KPIs noted above, we recommend that staff work with our committee to develop a post-project survey to objectively measure applicants' customer experience.

Thank you for your consideration and continued partnership.