



Development CITY OF AUSTIN
SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Stakeholder Meeting

Site Plan / Subdivision
Review and Inspections

October 17, 2023

Engagement Format



- Presentation followed by question and answer session
- Two ways to participate:
 - Speak by raising your hand on the control panel. You will be asked to unmute. Please mute yourself when finished.
 - Written questions using the Q&A function at the bottom of your screen.

Overview

- Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative
- Regulatory Policy & Administration
- Land Development Information Services
- Land Use Intake
- Land Use Review
- Community Tree Preservation
- Public Project Review
- Site & Subdivision Inspections
- Environmental Inspections



An aerial photograph of a city skyline. In the foreground, a river flows through a park-like area with trees showing autumn foliage. A bridge with graffiti on its side spans the river. In the background, a dense urban skyline features several prominent skyscrapers under a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative

Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Initiated an interdepartmental **site plan process assessment** with **McKinsey & Co** in March
- Worked with **stakeholders and staff** to assess **each phase** of the site plan process and **recommend opportunities for improvement**
- High-level **findings**:
 - Processes and regulations are extensive, complicated and change often
 - Internal and external frustration with the process
 - Customer satisfaction is low

Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Assessment process also included **co-creation of 41 potential improvement initiatives** that would address concerns
- August 31 Council authorized negotiation and execution of an **implementation contract with McKinsey & Co.**
- Contract has been executed and **implementation** work with McKinsey **kicked off last week**
- **Progress** has also been made on **several initiatives** that have been **moving forward on a parallel path**

Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative



Updates & Critical Initiatives

What to expect moving forward:

- **Rapid implementation** with interdepartmental leadership and support at all levels
- Targeted and initiative specific stakeholder **engagement**
- Frequent **communication**
 - Dedicated web page with information about initiatives, implantation teams, progress and feedback opportunities
 - Monthly newsletter updates
 - More frequent stand-alone communications on major milestones
- **Improved experience overall**

Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative

■ quick wins

Critical enablers

Initiatives that enable other initiatives

- 1 Establish gold standard training ground
- 6 Align Site Plan reviewers on their primary mission and customer
- 2 Staff incentives aligned with process goals
- 5 Evaluate organization design
- 7 Cadenced inter and intra departmental meetings to discuss continuous improvement
- 8 Enhanced centralized process around KPIs within and across departments
- 22 Determine and map overlapping codes/regulations and metrics
- 23 Rationalize / refine / consolidate code criteria manual(s) and publicize interpretation(s)
- 32 Enhance & ensure consistent use of internal system of record

Quality of experience

Initiatives designed to enhance experience of staff and applicants

- 3 Optimize hiring methodology
- 9 Rationalize fee schedule
- 10 Implement customer service best practices (e.g., turn camera/video on, accessibility)
- 11 Consolidated review team for completeness check
- 12 Empower the case manager and ensure consistency in case manager assignments
- 13 Formalize and publish permit signing order
- 16 Recalibrate completeness check
- 17 Improve Master Comment Report format
- 18 Prioritize application by tiers
- 19 Formalize "re-review" process if/when department reviewers change
- 20 Improve internal and external conflict resolution process
- 24 Formalize approach around LDC additions/changes
- 25 Enhance application wizard (questionnaire) that exists as part of the City of Austin website
- 26 Application training resources
- 27 Implement applicant attestation of Site Plan completeness and accuracy upon intake
- 28 Cadenced inter and intra departmental meetings to discuss ongoing applications
- 33 Enhance customer facing portal
- 39 Automate fee calculation and posting

Speed of the process

Initiatives that facilitate faster process execution

- 4 Contractors/ temps for site plan reviews
- 14 Standardize site plan formal review activities
- 15 Formalize pre-submission meetings
- 21 Formalize post-first review cycle meetings
- 29 Scheduling (office hours/rotating customer meetings days)
- 30 Provide rolling draft comments to applicant
- 31 Applicant ability to self-certify (w/potential fee)
- 34 Enhance application wizard (questionnaire) that is linked and a part of the site plan application process
- 35 Automate required documents at submission
- 36 Digitize signature process
- 37 Automate/ integrate application entry to system of record
- 38 CRM system to auto-capture communications
- 40 AI digitized completeness check
- 41 AI digitized formal review

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Regulatory Policy & Administration

Regulatory Policy & Administration



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Continued work through the **Code Cabinet** process to support land development code amendments
- Implementation of **Phase I of Site Plan Lite** regulations, which establishes a new process for **3 – 4 unit residential**
- Creating a **Technical Advisory Review Panel** to support the **Land Development Rules Administrator** in providing greater citywide coordination and oversight of rules process

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Land Development Information Services

Land Development Information Svcs



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Processing time for Exemptions and Corrections down 50% (from 16 days to 8) this fiscal year
- Transitioning **Site Plan Exemption reviews to AMANDA** allowing for more efficient staff reviews and improved Portal service by December 2023
 - **Payment will be due at submittal**
 - **LDIS Submittals** will be rolled into a **new unified submittal form** similar to Exemption Submittal Form
- **Sign Permits** now administered by LDIS – no changes to process

Land Development Information Svcs



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Realigned staff to create **dedicated site plan case management**
- LDIS will also oversee Affordable Housing Project Coordinators

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Land Use Intake

Land Use Intake



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Continued effort to maintain **1 business day turn-around** for all new webform tickets
- **Targeted document submittal** to timely processing, minimize duplication, and reduce time in queue
- Continued **staff training** to improve consistency and efficiency of services
- **Significant changes** coming to LUR Intake for site plans and subdivisions as a result of recent legislation
 - Processes **still being evaluated and adjusted** to ensure compliance
 - Will go into effect January 1, 2024

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Land Use Review

Land Use Review



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Significantly improved site plan processing times citywide** this fiscal year:
 - Initial reviews improved 41% (81 dys to 36 dys)
 - Update reviews improved 45% (45 dys to 20 dys)
- **Realigned existing staff** to close communication gaps
- Launched an **improvement in code interpretation** to fully realize the one-year allowance for site plan extensions
- Piloted an **in-house signature process** utilizing Bluebeam Studio

Land Use Review



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Clarifying extension and expiration policies** to provide consistency and predictability (**Expected completion date 10/31/23**)
- **Initiated 3rd party review for Drainage Engineering and Water Quality** to expedite reviews and clear backlogs
- **Continued Drainage Engineering and Water Quality reviews** from partner departments to clear backlogs

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Tree Review (Site & Subdivision)

Tree Review (Site & Subdivision)



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Processing time down** for site plan and subdivision reviews
 - Down 50% for site plan (11 days)
 - Down 8% for subdivision (19 days)
- Continuing monthly “**Get Tree Smart**” **Educational programs** for the public and the development community
- **Critical changes** to subdivision tree review:
 - **Single lot subdivision applications no longer require tree review**
 - Only applying **heritage tree regulations** at the subdivision stage
 - All other tree requirements will be **assessed with site plan or building permit application**

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Public Project Review

Public Project Review



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Launched in June 2023** after six-month test pilot
- **Mission** is to properly steward financial resources of capital and publicly funded projects by providing a timely and collaborative permitting review process
- **Focused** on CIP/COA funded, AISD, and Permanent Supportive Housing projects
- Program premise is to **offer insights** and **recommendations** from project **concept through design completion** to reduce the time needed for formal review

Public Project Review



Updates & Critical Initiatives

Lessons Learned

- Offering **continuous technical feedback** during the design phase enhances the feasibility and acceptance of a project
- **Leveraging innovative software tools** to provide comments to applicants on the plan set vs. typed comment reports, promotes collaborative and efficient communication
- **Allocating a dedicated team** to the project, with multiple touchpoints for communication, streamlines the process for enhanced efficiency

Public Project Review

Affordable Housing Program



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Fully staffed this year** with the addition of three Project Coordinators
- Provides project coordination for **affordable housing projects** to promote timely development reviews
- **Provides comprehensive case management** including complex projects, ESPA's and SERs with utilities, offsite infrastructure site plans, license agreements, etc.
- Currently **tracking and providing support for 76 affordable housing developments**

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Site & Subdivision Inspections

Site and Subdivision Inspections



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Improvements to the **Construction Inspection links** for staff
- Building a **library of processes and procedures**
- **Developing training** for inspectors on job specific applications

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Environmental Inspections

Environmental Inspections



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **North and South Commercial Inspections** teams transitioned to one Commercial Team effective **July 31, 2023**
- **Boat Dock Registration Program** transitioned to Environmental Inspections and Enforcement Division effective **October 1, 2023**
- **Austin 3-1-1 Mobile App Update – October 9, 2023**
 - Enhanced reporting capabilities
 - 3-1-1 Environmental complaints investigated by Enforcement staff and documented in CSR and AMANDA

Environmental Inspections



Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Expanding Environmental Inspections Lunch and Learn** series and increasing frequency to monthly; training materials used **internally and externally**
- **Ongoing process improvements in AMANDA** – coming soon, TimeTrade and numerous other improvements within AMANDA for increased efficiency in residential inspections.



CITY OF AUSTIN
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Thank you!