

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 30, 2020

TO T.C. Broadnax, City Manager

SUBJECT **COVID-19 Recommended Changes in Processes for Sustainable Development & Economic Development**

It is obvious that COVID-19 is changing the way we do business at the City of Dallas. City staff members, particularly those in our Office of Economic Development (OED) and Sustainable Development and Construction (SDC), have been working tirelessly over the last few weeks to ensure that we preserve the economic viability of our great city, including the viability of our residential and commercial construction industry. We still have work to do. The following are vital recommendations that SDC and OED must prioritize now:

We request that **Sustainable Development and Construction** prioritize the following tasks (“SDC Priority Tasks”) and submit weekly status reports via memo to the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 Economic Recovery & Assistance and via phone to CM West’s Developer/Builder Update Call:

1. There should be a comprehensive list of contacts for development-related questions – see Fort Worth as an example: <http://fortworthtexas.gov/developmentservices/contact/> This should include how to *interact with engineering, DWU, and Fire*.
2. Allow Zoning and Board of Adjustment applications to be submitted via email, with signature pages and/or required copies to be mailed after completeness and acceptance of the application.
3. Electronic signatures should be accepted, just as they are by Dallas County Courts and Dallas County deed records.
4. Repair the link to sign up to access the trade permits (POSSE): https://developdallas.dallascityhall.com/contractor/signup_contractorforwebid.htm
5. There should be information about how to submit plat applications online.
6. Provide recommendations on how applicants should handle complex projects that need community engagement. Councilmembers should also weigh in on how to handle meetings that may expect high attendance.

After the SDC Priority Tasks are achieved or near completion, we request that SDC focus on the following permitting-focused tasks. We do not expect weekly updates of the tasks below until after the Priority Tasks are achieved:

1. Design online permitting system to be more intuitive and allow for “real-time” interaction among public and private sector project team members, including:
 - a. Utilize a website to track the permit’s progress

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- b. Indicate when the application reaches each department and when that department approves their section
- c. Plan reviewers can request follow-up to comments and comments can be responded to directly to the individual that made the comments
- d. Track progress and track response times on both the review team and the applicant. This way, there is real-time documentation to the review in the event of a complaint
- e. Once a permit is issued, store a copy of the permit and permit documents
- f. After the permit is issued, track inspection approvals, failures and comments and make visible to the construction team
- g. Include required inspection checklists developed by the City Project Manager and construction team
- h. Include a list of Final/CO inspections from all departments as required such as: Building, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Fire, Engineering, DWU, Storm Water Pollution (on small sites), Landscaping/Irrigation, Planning and Zoning, TxDOT, etc.
 - i. This would eliminate confusion when obtaining the project's CO and would allow contractors a clear path and plan. This will help keep the developers informed and minimize complaints.
- i. Prior to close-out, upload and store final record drawings and close-out documents
- j. Upon Project Close-out, maintain all records of the project in one location and make available for future reference.

We request that the **Office of Economic Development** prioritize the following task and submit weekly status reports via memo to the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 Economic Recovery & Assistance:

1. Create a blanket extension on developer deadlines for all TIF/380 grants and other incentive agreements that mandate deadlines (such as for when construction begins/is complete and local hiring minimums) that cannot be met right now.

We further request that the **City Controller's Office** prioritize and expedite discussions with Bank of America regarding processing of credit cards in order for Zoning and Board of Adjustment fees to be paid via credit card over the phone or online.

We understand that staff may need resources to accomplish the tasks above. Do not hesitate to be aggressive and completely transparent in asking Council for help.

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Chad West, Chair
Housing & Homelessness
Solutions Committee



Lee Kleinman, Chair,
Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee



Adam Medrano, Vice Chair
Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee



David Blewett, Member
Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee

c: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services
Kris Sweckard, Director, Sustainable Development & Construction
Courtney Pogue, Director, Office of Economic Development
Sheri Kowalski, Director, City Controller's Office