

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Development Services update and request for additional positions to keep pace with development activity.

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## DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

### DIRECTION

Staff will present an update on development activity, including major projects, performance data, and customer feedback. Following discussion, staff will request that Council authorize adding 12 full-time employee positions for Development Services and direct staff to return at a future date with the appropriate legislation on the consent calendar.

## RECOMMENDATION

Authorize adding 12 full-time employee positions for Development Services and direct staff to return at a future date with the appropriate legislation on the consent calendar.

## BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Development activity in Bellevue continues at a high level with strong interest in new projects, including office and residential development. This sustained activity represents significant developer and investment interest in Bellevue and continues to deliver projects that contribute to the high-quality built environment across the City. To keep pace and support service level expectations, staff is seeking Council authorization to add 12 full-time employee positions in 2022. These additional positions will be supported by development permit fees charged to applicants and will allow Development Services to provide the necessary staffing to adjust to this continued high level of development as many projects transition from land use and building review to construction.

### Major Projects

The record-setting development cycle that has now extended over eight consecutive years is continuing into 2022 and beyond with key workload indicators at peak levels. The value of construction represented by issued building permits in 2021 exceeded \$1.6 billion, with over 85,000 inspections conducted and application volumes reaching a record high of more than 16,000. During the Council Study Session staff will provide additional information showing the duration and magnitude of the City's current development cycle and what is anticipated with future development activity.

Construction activity across the City is visible, with major projects underway in Downtown and BelRed, adding to the total number of tower cranes above the horizon. Notable projects currently under

construction in Downtown include Avenue Bellevue, Bellevue Plaza, the 555 108<sup>th</sup> Office Tower, Bellevue 600, The Artise, Broadstone Gateway and The Eight; and in BelRed, projects include Big 1, Northup Way Mixed Use, and Block 6. Further, the Eastgate Housing Campus, which includes affordable housing, supportive housing, and a permanent homeless men’s shelter, has received land use approval, associated building permits, and is also under construction.

In addition to providing permit review and inspection services for development projects in 2021, Development Services staff were actively involved in efforts to advance other Council priorities. Staff completed several code amendments, and worked closely with the Community Development Department to complete the code amendments for the East Main Station Area Plan. Staff also processed several Land Use Code Amendments responding to the Affordable Housing Strategy in support of Council priorities.

**Performance Data and Customer Feedback**

Projects currently under review and construction are complex, and City staff are working closely with the project design and construction teams to provide predictability in the permit and inspection processes. This ongoing collaboration is necessary to ensure buildings and related infrastructure meet City codes and standards focused on quality and safety, and that noise, traffic, and other impacts from construction are appropriately managed and mitigated.

Development Services staff have also remained focused on the commitment to continuous improvement work over the past year. Accomplishments and major work initiatives planned for the year ahead include a significant upgrade to the permit tracking system, improving online access to application information, adapting services based on customer feedback, and developing a comprehensive resource strategy that responds to workload and performance indicators.

**POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

**Policy Impact**

N/A

**Fiscal Impact**

The 12 requested full-time employee positions are revenue-backed by development permit fees charged to applicants. Seven of the requested positions will reside in the Development Services Fund budget and five positions will reside in the General Fund budget.

**OPTIONS**

1. Authorize adding 12 full-time employee positions for Development Services and direct staff to return at a future date with the appropriate legislation on consent calendar.
2. Do not authorize adding 12 full-time employee positions for Development Services and provide alternative direction to staff.

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

**AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

N/A