

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC**Development Services Activity and Continuous Improvement Update**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**INFORMATION
ONLY**

Bi-annual development activity update including information on projects in the construction and application review pipeline. Staff will also share information on several key process improvements aimed at creating a more consistent, understandable and predictable permitting process.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**Development Activity Update**

Development interest in Bellevue has remained strong with several major commercial and multi-family residential projects in the development review pipeline. However, economic factors such as lower demand for office space, high-interest rates, and high-construction costs contributed to fewer major projects starting construction in recent years. The reduction of major projects moving to construction has not impacted the high volume of development permit applications. In 2025, Development Services received over 18,000 permit applications and issued over 16,000 permits, representing historically high volumes in both categories. The pace of permit applications was driven in part by investments in new single-family housing, residential reinvestment projects, and new applications stemming from affordable housing incentives, middle housing, and the updated zoning and development regulations adopted as part of the Wilburton Vision Implementation Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA).

Looking ahead, the volume of development applications is forecasted to remain high over the next year. In addition, early indicators, such as new major project pre-application conferences and construction permit applications, suggest an increase in projects progressing to construction sometime in the future.

Development Services will continue to monitor permit and pre-development activity and continue to align resources with expected levels of service delivery.

Continuous Improvement

In recent years, Development Services has been focused on several code updates, process changes and continuous improvement efforts. Major accomplishments in 2025 have included:

- Department Strategic Plan: Updated Vision, Mission and Goals
- Improvements in permit review timeline performance
- Better coordination between plan review and inspection
- Implemented coordinated pre-construction conferences
- Scheduled major project debriefs with applicants
- First review meetings scheduled at time of issuance of review comments
- Review cycle targets established
- Single family building permit review pilot project
- New permit review consultant contracts added
- FEMA grant awarded to support digitizing paper permit records
- Development Services essentials onboarding program implemented
- Hosted a residential permitting expo
- Building safety month public education & awareness
- Land use planning initiatives (LUPI)
- Streamlined hourly invoicing through MyBuildingPermit.com
- Public-private partnership formed with Govstream.ai

With the completion of an updated strategic plan, the Development Services Department has embraced a new vision grounded in collaboration, innovation and service, along with a renewed mission that upholds an important commitment to the Bellevue community. *Building the Best Bellevue, Together*, is the vision that now guides the work of the Department while the mission upholds a commitment to protecting the quality, safety and integrity of the built and natural environment. Partnership is a major tenet of this new strategic direction where Development Services partners to enhance an equitable, inclusive and livable city for everyone.

To bring this new vision and mission to life, the Department strategic plan was based on a balanced approach that includes a framework aligning daily work with broader goals. The plan also includes an important adaptive approach where the Department will be measuring performance and adjusting future priorities to ensure consistent high-quality outcomes are being delivered across four key focus areas. These four areas build the competencies and culture the Department must continuously develop to succeed.

- Customer and Community Perspective
- Process and Systems Perspective
- Financial Perspective
- Employee Learning and Growth Perspective

As 2026 begins, Development Services organized a series of initiatives aligned with strategic priorities which include permit streamlining and delivering a more understandable and predictable process to the

community. These improvement efforts are shaped by feedback received through the Department’s strategic planning effort, customer experience program and the Bellevue Development Committee. Staff will share details from the 2026-2027 Development Services continuous improvement work program along with the process the Department has undertaken to align strategic priorities and stakeholder feedback. Some of the major improvements staff will highlight include:

- Bellevue Development Committee sub team process improvements
- Customer service training program
- Land use entitlement process improvements
- Implementing middle housing permit process improvements
- Establishing a pre-approved detached accessory dwelling unit program
- Small business program concierge services
- Process and systems changes to support consistent service delivery
- Transparent and accountable public facing performance dashboards
- Artificial intelligence to streamline permitting
- Developing a future focused technology roadmap
- Digitizing historical paper permit records
- Piloting project management on building permit applications
- Performance management system improvement
- Planning for future financial investments
- Enhancing employee onboarding programs
- City Hall space renovation to support a growing workforce
- Standardized operating procedures for all workgroups
- Workforce skill and competency building to support succession planning

As evidenced by this new aggressive work program, Development Services is keenly focused on the role the Department plays in facilitating quality and timely development. *Building the Best Bellevue, Together*, requires a commitment to working in close coordination across the multi-departmental line of business and listening to perspectives of those each city department serves. Department leadership from Development Services, Transportation, Utilities and Fire are in attendance at the Council meeting to share their commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration as a single line business that delivers exceptional services to the community.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

N/A

Fiscal Impact

The City Council approved 2025-2026 budget contains sufficient resources for Development Services to advance continuous improvement work program items funded through Development Services revenue, reserves, and contingencies.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A