DATE: August 3, 2020

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

FROM: Sabra Schneider, Chief Information Officer, 452-4890
             Information Technology Department

             Mike Brennan, Director, 452-4113
             Development Services Department

SUBJECT: Robotic Process Automation Pilot Project

The Information Technology Department (ITD) partnered with the Development Services Department (DSD) to successfully complete Bellevue's first Robotic Process Automation (RPA) pilot project.

DSD leverages the industry-leading plan review software Bluebeam Revu and collaboration platform Bluebeam Studio. The Bluebeam Studio collaboration software contains over 2,500 active plan review sessions for permit applications and is hosted on-premise. However, the vendor is discontinuing support of the on-premise product. To move to the lower-cost, higher resilience Bluebeam Studio Cloud, the City was required to migrate 2,500 plan review sessions from the on-premise servers to the cloud. Unfortunately, the vendor did not offer an automated solution or Application Programming Interface (API) for migration.

Because the vendor did not offer an automated migration solution, the City was required to process the cloud migration manually. The manual migration process has proven to be both time consuming and challenging due to the high volume of data that requires migration to the cloud. Further, existing staff did not have the capacity for this body of work or an easy and efficient way to validate the accuracy of the migrated data.

RPA provides a platform to automate complex manual processes thus freeing up internal human resources for higher-value work. After IT automated the migration process, the process ran 10 times faster than a manual migration. In addition, the migration ran outside of regular business hours and did not disrupt the day to day business operations of the department.

The innovative migration used RPA, without requiring DSD to reduce services, add head count, or delay plan reviews, all with a success rate of 96 percent. The City realized more than $15,000 in staff time savings with this approach and gained valuable experience for deploying the next RPA project. The robot itself can be re-deployed for additional use because its work on the original project is complete.