

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Development Services Activities Update

Mike Brennan, Director, 452-4113

Liz Stead, Land Use Director, 452-2725

Jake Hesselgesser, Assistant Director, 452-6964

*Development Services Department***DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL****INFORMATION
ONLY**

Update on development activity including projects under construction and in the application “pipeline.” Staff will also share the development forecast and feedback received from customer surveys.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

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 continued developer and investor interest in Bellevue, with development delivering projects that are adding to a vibrant and interesting City. The bulk of new development the City is currently experiencing is in the planned growth areas of Downtown and BelRed.

On Monday, September 13, staff will present to the Council an update of Development Services activities including a look back on the first half of 2021, a snapshot of current development, and a look ahead at what is anticipated over the next 12-18 months with new projects.

The record-setting development cycle that has now extended over eight consecutive years is continuing into 2021 with key workload indicators continuing to hover at peak levels. The forecast for 2021 shows the estimated value of construction represented by issued permits will exceed \$1.2 billion, with over 85,000 inspections, and permits issued approaching 15,000. 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 in future development activity.

Construction activity across the City is visible with major projects underway downtown and tower cranes visible above the horizon as you look east to BelRed. Notable projects currently under construction include 1001 Office Towers, Avenue Bellevue, Bellevue Plaza, 555 108th Office Tower and Block 6 in the Spring District. These and other 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 will 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.

In addition to providing permit review and inspection services for development projects, Development Services is actively involved in completing work to advance other Council priorities, including the land use process required to site the Congregations for the Homeless permanent men's shelter, advancing the Council's affordable housing strategies, and working closely with the Community Development Department to complete the Land Use Code Amendments for the East Main Station Area Plan.

The high number of development applications combined with the need to rapidly adjust City services due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic has posed new challenges in meeting customer needs. In 2020, development review staff was able to move quickly and efficiently to remote work due to the paperless permitting systems implemented in previous years. Community meetings and public hearings were moved to and processed in a virtual environment, and a Virtual Permit Center was launched to continue to give customers convenient access to staff. However, peak volumes of permit activity and the pandemic have caused delays for some permits as Development Services continues to address impacts from staff turnover combined with a difficult recruitment environment. Hiring managers are exploring new ways to meet staffing and resource needs and are working closely with the Human Resources Department to quickly fill vacant positions.

Despite the challenges of the past year, the commitment to continuous improvement was not lost. Staff will also share highlights of accomplishments over the past year and major work initiatives planned for the year ahead including a significant upgrade to the permit tracking system, the Virtual Permit Center, delivering on-line access to construction codes with state and local amendments, enhancements to the Weekly Permit Bulletin, and improving public access to permit data.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

There is no policy impact associated with this update.

Fiscal Impact

The presentation is for informational purposes only; no changes in service delivery are proposed that could generate fiscal impacts.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A