



# Memorandum

**TO:** COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Chris Burton

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** May 11, 2022

Approved

Date

5/13/22

**SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES PROCESS IMPROVEMENT AND  
DASHBOARD REPORT**

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the Development Services Process Improvements and Dashboard update.

## BACKGROUND

On January 19, 2022, the Rules and Open Government Committee approved the January 18, 2022 memorandum submitted by Mayor Liccardo directing that the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement (PBCE) provide an update at the Community and Economic Development (CED) Committee with updated metrics and dashboard data that detail bottlenecks in the development process, as well as recommendations for short- and long-term improvements. At the February 28, 2022, CED Committee meeting, PBCE staff provided a status report on Development Services Process Improvements and presented the Dashboard. The Dashboard highlighted 18 unique metrics that provide insights into three main phases of the development process: (1) intake, (2) plan review, and (3) issuance/inspection. Each metric presented a snapshot of the most recent monthly data available and a historical reference of the metric information from the past five to twelve months.

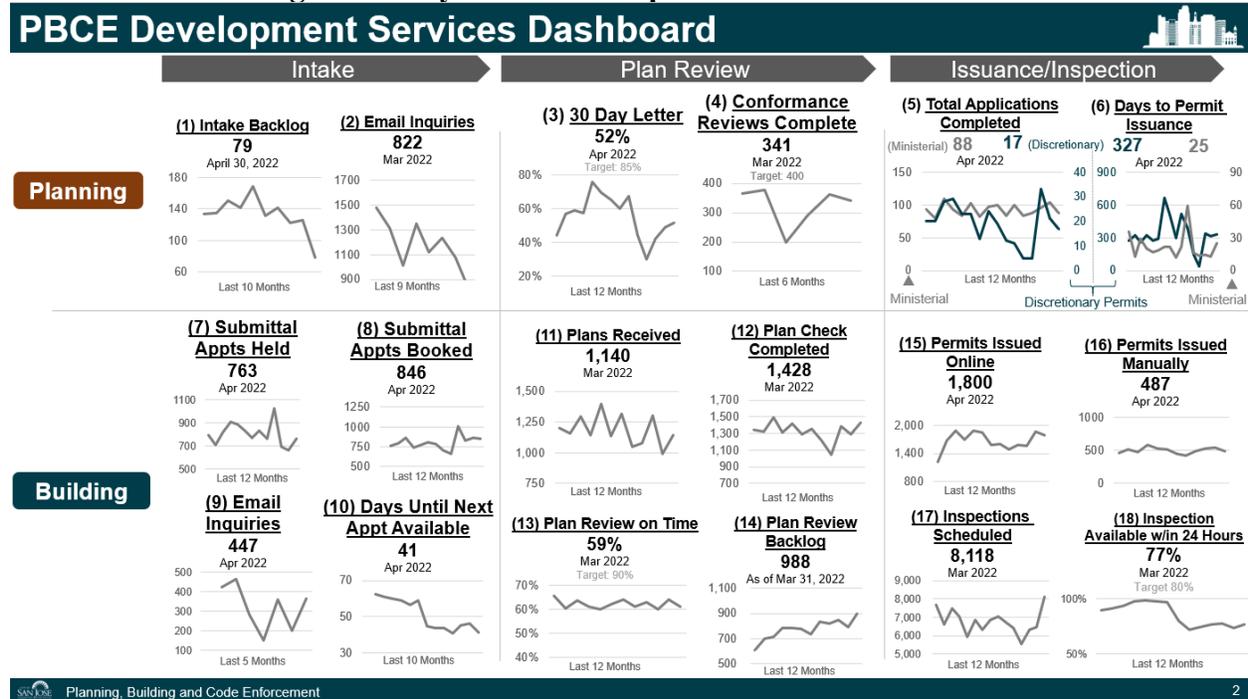
In addition to the dashboard overview, staff provided a deeper dive into the Building Intake process to illustrate the four main service lines available for customers booking appointments to submit applications for review. Each service included information on the average days between bookings and the customers' scheduled appointments, the number of appointments held in the previous months, and a trend line showing each of the past twelve months' average time between booking and appointment dates. The overall trend showed gradual decreases in the time between bookings and customers' scheduled appointments for all four service lines with the most significant decreases for Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) submittals and simple projects which are permits that do not require significant construction and are generally limited to one construction sub-trade specialty. Finally, a new service line called the Rapid Online Service

Intake (“ROSI”) was reported on its inaugural month’s operations including 50 appointments and 130 future bookings.

**ANALYSIS**

The May 2022 update of the Development Services Dashboard features the same 18 metrics with updated data for February, March, and April, where the data was available. The updated May dashboard is shown below in Figure 1, with detailed descriptions of each Dashboard metric included in Attachment A. The full-size Dashboard is included in Attachment B. Most of the metrics were stable or normalized from the December 2021 holiday closure of City Hall. Several metrics have begun to indicate an early uptick in permitting activity often seen during the summer months. Several key insights from the dashboard have been identified for further analysis in the sections below.

**Figure 1: May PBCE Development Service Dashboard**



**Planning Permit Center**

The Planning Intake phase is summarized in the Dashboard by metrics (1) Intake Backlog and (2) Email Inquiries which summarize the primary functions of the Planning Permit Center operations. The Intake Backlog summarizes the number of permit applications submitted through the [ZoningQuestions@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:ZoningQuestions@sanjoseca.gov) email address. Also, metric 2 shows the number of individual emails submitted to [ZoningQuestions@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:ZoningQuestions@sanjoseca.gov) regarding questions about zoning, planning applications, or other development services inquiry. While both of these

metrics' downward trends indicate positive outcomes for customers, recent staff vacancies for the Planning Permit Center team indicate that application processing has been prioritized over email inquiries. Both Planning Technician positions in the Permit Center, that are primarily responsible for responding to general inquiries, had been vacant since February 2022. So, while email inquiries have decreased, this is likely attributed to reduced back and forth with customers who often have follow-up questions from their initial inquiry. While the reduction of the backlog will enable customers to receive their planning approval sooner, email inquiries often serve as the gateway for future planning applications. This issue will slowly be resolved now that these two positions were filled in April 2022, with a third Planning Technician position for the Permit Center proposed in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget.

### ***Building Plan Review***

The second insight from this quarter's dashboard is the continuing pressure on the Building Plan Review team composed of engineers that review the architectural plans for code compliance before permit issuance. Dashboard metrics 12, 13, and 14 show that while plan checks completed have risen from the December holiday low, the ratio of those reviews completed on time is stubbornly low and the backlog of reviews to be completed continues to grow. While there are several causes of this increase in the Plan Review backlog, the dominant factor is the 30% vacancy rate in the Associate Engineer position. While recruitment and peak staffing is being sought, the Building Division is taking steps to reduce the pressure on the Plan Review team. This includes diverting as many projects away from being routed to the team in the first place and moving simpler application types into the "Over the Counter" service line that allows for a quick review of the plans during intake and issuance during the appointment. This rapid review reduces the administrative burden of assigning projects, drafting and sending comment letters, and re-reviewing plans for conformance to past comments. This transition would be supported by the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget proposal to add four Permit Specialists to the Building Permit team who could staff additional Over-the-Counter service lines. Similarly, staff is exploring expanding the Express Service which will allow smaller residential projects the ability to meet with engineers and other Development Services staff to complete the review of their application in a single meeting to prevent more projects from being added to the backlog.

### ***Building Inspection***

The final insight from the May 2022 Dashboard is the early indication of a summer rush for inspection demand starting to increase. While the initial decline in available inspections within 24 hours started to decrease in fall 2021, this was mainly attributed to staffing shortages caused by vacancies and staff vacation balances reaching their max from two years of the pandemic. Following the December 2021 holiday slowdown, the inspection team started to maximize inspection schedules and began Saturday overtime appointments to help address the increase in inspection demand. These practices are traditionally deployed in the summer months following Memorial Day when most home improvement projects are conducted. The sharp increase in inspections conducted in March 2022 (indicated in metric 17) did little to offset the inspections available indicated in metric 18, indicating a sustained demand from customers for inspections.

Currently, 77% of inspections are available within 24 hours which is just below the 80% target. The Building Team will continue to monitor this trend while continuing overtime and recruitment for the 18 vacant inspector positions (of the 63 approved inspector positions). If these actions are unable to meet future requests from inspectors, the team will explore reducing inspection frequency for certain high-volume, low-risk contractors such as reroofing companies that nearly always pass inspection. Instead of inspecting all projects, random projects will be inspected to ensure ongoing compliance for these historically reliable contractors.

### ***2022 California Building Code***

The California Building Code is updated every three years with the 2022 update required to take effect before January 1, 2023. Traditionally there is a rush of new building submissions before the Code is updated since projects are evaluated under the code version for the year in which they were submitted. This rush has not been actualized in the May 2022 Dashboard but will likely start to pick up in the late fall and early winter. The Building Division historically has made accommodations to allow building permit application submissions without intake appointments so their submission can be recognized under the current Code cycle. While this is appreciated by customers, this often creates a surge in demand for plan review and intake operations that will take months to catch up. The Building Division has started planning for this service impact and will report at future Development Service Dashboard updates on its plan for the imminent Code update.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Staff will continue to monitor Development Services metrics and implement the actions outlined in the staff memorandum. Staff is also evaluating the existing 18 metrics to identify improvements that help to provide insights to the Development Services pipeline. Staff expects to present any proposed updates at the next scheduled Dashboard update currently scheduled for August 2022.

### **CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSÉ**

The items in the follow-up report align with one or more of the Climate Smart San Jose's energy, water, or mobility goals.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the May 23, 2022, Community and Economic Development Committee.

May 11, 2022

**Subject: Development Services Dashboard Update**

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## **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office

## **CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City Action.

/s/  
CHRIS BURTON  
Director, Planning, Building and  
Code Enforcement

For questions, please contact Alex Powell, Chief of Staff, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, at (408) 535-1258 or [alex.powell@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:alex.powell@sanjoseca.gov).

## **Attachments:**

Attachment A – Dashboard Metric Descriptions

Attachment B – PBCE Development Services Dashboard

## Attachment A: Dashboard Metric Descriptions

	Metric	Phase	Division	Description
1	Intake Backlog	Intake	Planning	How many email inquiries for application submittal for the Permit Center to be assigned.
2	Email Inquiries	Intake	Planning	Number of emails completed + unread at the end of the month (using the first full week of the next month) for <a href="mailto:ZoningQuestions@sanjoseca.gov">ZoningQuestions@sanjoseca.gov</a>
3	30 Day letter	Review	Planning	Of the 30-day letters that were due each month, how many did we send out within the 30-day target.
4	Conformance Reviews Complete	Review	Planning	How many building permit zoning conformance (also referred to as “EPR”) has been completed.
5	Total Applications Completed	Issuance	Planning	Count of number of Planning Folders had “Issued Date” in each month.
6	Days to Permit Issuance	Issuance	Planning	Measures how long it takes to issue Planning Permit from intake to issuance (public hearing) date
7	Intake Appts	Intake	Building	Count of the number of appointments held each month across the four main intake lines (ADU, OTC Plan Review and Simple)
8	Appts Booked	Intake	Building	Count of how many appointments customers reserve each month (could book appointments in future months).
9	Email Inquiries	Intake	Building	Number of emails received for <a href="mailto:Building.Permits@sanjoseca.gov">Building.Permits@sanjoseca.gov</a> and does not include online permits, targeted review, RS Resubmittals, or Plan review email inbox.
10	Days Until Next Appt Available	Intake	Building	When a customer booked an appointment in a given month, how many calendar days have to book the appointment out into the future.
11	Plans Received	Review	Building	Count of how many separate Building Plans (Structural, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing) were submitted each month, including both new submissions and revisions/resubmittals.

12	Plan Check Completed	Review	Building	Count of the number of separate plan reviews/checks completed each month for building structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing. Including both 1 <sup>st</sup> submissions and revisions/resubmittals.
13	Plan Review on Time	Review	Building	Measures what percent of the plan reviews completed were completed within the target timeframe for that particular type of review (based on project type and revision cycle).
14	Plan Review Backlog	Review	Building	By the end of the month, what was the remaining number of Plan Review sets that were still not reviewed including carryovers from the previous month. Includes both 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle and resubmittals.
15	Permits Issued Online	Issuance	Building	Count of the number of building permits were self-administered by customers on SJPermits.org allowing them to get their issued permit within 15 minutes on their own.
16	Permits Issued Manually	Issuance	Building	Count of the number of building permits that were manually intaken by staff and required some review by staff prior to issuance.
17	Inspections Scheduled	Inspection	Building	Count of inspections that were scheduled each month. This is nearly synonymous with inspections completed since inspections are almost always completed within 3 days of the date they are scheduled.
18	Inspection Available within 24 Hours	Inspection	Building	Measures the “backlog” of inspection by looking at how many days out is the next available inspection is based on the date the customer tried to schedule their inspection.

# Attachment B: PBCE Development Services Dashboard



## Intake

## Plan Review

## Issuance/Inspection

### Planning

#### (1) Intake Backlog

79

April 30, 2022



#### (2) Email Inquiries

822

Mar 2022



#### (3) 30 Day Letter

52%

Apr 2022

Target: 85%



#### (4) Conformance Reviews Complete

341

Mar 2022

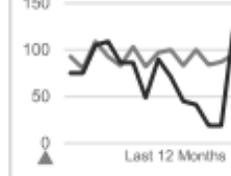
Target: 400



#### (5) Total Applications Completed

(Ministerial) 88 17 (Discretionary)

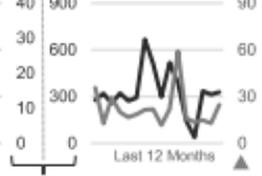
Apr 2022



#### (6) Days to Permit Issuance

327 25

Apr 2022



### Building

#### (7) Submittal Appts Held

763

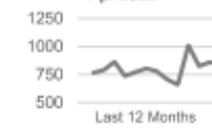
Apr 2022



#### (8) Submittal Appts Booked

846

Apr 2022



#### (11) Plans Received

1,140

Mar 2022



#### (12) Plan Check Completed

1,428

Mar 2022



#### (15) Permits Issued Online

1,800

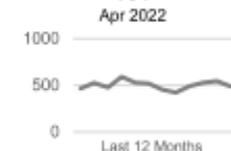
Apr 2022



#### (16) Permits Issued Manually

487

Apr 2022



#### (9) Email Inquiries

447

Apr 2022



#### (10) Days Until Next Appt Available

41

Apr 2022

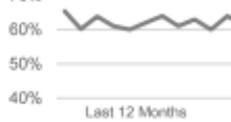


#### (13) Plan Review on Time

59%

Mar 2022

Target: 90%



#### (14) Plan Review Backlog

988

As of Mar 31, 2022



#### (17) Inspections Scheduled

8,118

Mar 2022



#### (18) Inspection Available w/in 24 Hours

77%

Mar 2022

Target 80%

