



# Memorandum

**TO:** RULES AND OPEN  
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Chris Burton

**SUBJECT:** See Below

**DATE:** March 10, 2026

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Approved

Date:

3/12/26

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**SUBJECT: From Ideation to Occupancy: A Guide to Building in San José, Permitting, Timelines, and Coordination**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Set a City Council Study Session entitled *From Ideation to Occupancy: A Guide to Building in San José, Permitting, Timelines, and Coordination* for Monday, April 20, 2026, from 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers and approve the Study Session agenda.

## **PURPOSE**

This Study Session is intended to provide City Council a clear foundation for how the permitting system works today and the factors that influence variability in timelines and outcomes.

## **OUTCOME**

Staff will provide an overview of development services responsibilities and volume of activity across partner departments, then use multifamily new construction as a primary example to illustrate the coordinated and interdependent nature of the permitting continuum.

## **BACKGROUND**

San José's development services system, encompassing the Planning and Building Divisions of the Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department, as well as the Development Services Division of the Public Works Department and the Bureau of Fire

Prevention in the Fire Department, supports a broad range of customers and project types, from simple homeowner permits through complex commercial and housing development. The process requires coordination across multiple City departments and external partners to ensure projects are safe, code-compliant, and aligned with adopted requirements.

In recent years, the development environment has become more complex due to evolving state law requirements, updated codes and technical standards, and increasing expectations for coordination and customer transparency. This Study Session is intended to provide the City Council with a clear foundation for how the system works today and the factors that influence variability in timelines and outcomes.

## **ANALYSIS**

Staff will provide an overview of development services responsibilities and the volume of activity across partner departments, then use multifamily new construction as a primary example to illustrate the coordinated and interdependent nature of the permitting continuum.

The Study Session will cover the following topics:

1. Development Services at a Glance
2. The Development Permitting Continuum: City Perspective and Development Community Perspective
3. Case Study: Enhanced Coordination on Priority Affordable Housing
4. What Drives Time to Completion: Where Time is Added and Where Time is Reduced
5. Fees and Requirements: Understanding Cost Recovery and Project Obligations
6. Tools and Technology Supporting the Work
7. Continuous Improvement: What's Underway and What's Next

## **COORDINATION**

This memorandum was coordinated with the Public Works Department and the Fire Department.

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

RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

March 10, 2026

**Subject: From Ideation to Occupancy: A Guide to Building in San José, Permitting, Timelines, and Coordination**

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For questions, please contact Alex Powell, Program Manager, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department, at [Alex.Powell@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Alex.Powell@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 535-1258.

**ATTACHMENT**

Study Session Agenda



# **City Council Meeting Agenda**

## **Study Session From Ideation to Occupancy: A Guide to Building in San José, Permitting, Timelines, and Coordination**

**Monday, April 20, 2026**

**1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**LOCATION:  
Council Chambers, City Hall**

- Call to Order and Roll Call

1:30 p.m. Study Session – From Application to Approval: A Guide to Building in San José, Permitting, Timelines, and Coordination

Council Chambers, City Hall

## **STUDY SESSION**

**Purpose:**

This Study Session is intended to provide City Council a clear foundation for how the permitting system works today and the factors that influence variability in timelines and outcomes.

**Outcome:**

Staff will provide an overview of development services responsibilities and volume of activity across partner departments, then use multifamily new construction as a primary example to illustrate the coordinated and interdependent nature of the permitting continuum.

A. Introduction

B. The Study Session will cover the following topics:

1. Development Services at a Glance
2. The Development Permitting Continuum: City Perspective and Development Community Perspective
3. Case Study: Enhanced Coordination on Priority Affordable Housing
4. What Drives Time to Completion: Where Time is Added and Where Time is Reduced
5. Fees and Requirements: Understanding Cost Recovery and Project Obligations
6. Tools and Technology Supporting the Work
7. Continuous Improvement: What's Underway and What's Next

- Public Comment

Members of the public may comment on agenda items only at this Special Meeting. There will be no Open Forum. Cal. Govt. Code §54954.3(a).

- Adjournment

**City Council**

**Study Session Agenda**

**April 20, 2026**