

RESOLUTION NO. #14

WHEREAS, development review and permitting are essential elements of an effective and efficient land development process, affecting everything from small home or business renovations to large commercial development; and

WHEREAS, the working draft of the Analysis of the Planning and Development Review Department by Zucker Systems (Zucker Report) confirms persistent delays in development review and permitting, a complex land development code, inconsistent code applications, and other serious organizational and process challenges and inefficiencies; and

WHEREAS, the delays and inconsistencies of Austin's development review and permitting process increase the cost and delay of small business expansion, and other desirable development, and inhibit the city's ability to respond to growing demand for housing, thus contributing in part to Austin's current affordability crisis; and

WHEREAS, the draft Zucker Report recommends numerous short-term and long-term actions to improve Austin's development review and permitting process; and

WHEREAS, the Austin City Manager has already taken some steps to resolve Austin's development review and permitting issues, including commissioning the Zucker Report, initiating the Code NEXT process, initiating organizational changes to the Planning and Development Review Department, and making progress toward acceptance of online payments; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin currently provides an expedited permitting process through the S.M.A.R.T. Housing program, and as the permitting process is being reviewed, the City Council would like to explore expanding and improving permitting programs that provide community benefits;

WHEREAS, the Austin City Council desires even higher priority and greater attention given to fixing the challenges presented; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Austin City Council directs the City Manager to provide within 30 days a plan to eliminate the citywide backlogs in the Planning and Development Review Department and other departments involved in, and sharing responsibility for, the development review and inspections process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Austin City Council directs the City Manager to provide within 60 days from the date of the finalized Zucker Report, but no later than June 30, 2015, a detailed response to the Zucker

Report and a recommended implementation plan to address the development review and permitting challenges identified therein. The plan should address, but not be limited to:

1. Improving the utility of the One Stop Shop to improve customer service, communication, and responsiveness of all involved divisions and departments;
2. Improved engagement with neighborhoods and their associations, environmental community, small business interests and other stakeholders;
3. Recommended metrics for performance goals and objectives so as to measure success; and
4. Recommended policy and budget changes, and any new tools necessary to ensure reforms are implemented expeditiously, effectively, and successfully.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager shall provide the council with detailed reports on the progress of development and permitting process reforms on a regular basis, but not less frequently than every 60 days.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The metrics for measuring success for all divisions and departments involved in, and sharing responsibility for, the development review and inspections process, will include, but not be limited to:

1. Those related to the number and backlog of pending requests for development review and permit applications;
2. The time required for development review and permit application processing;
3. The consistency of rule and ordinance application by staff;
4. Strengthening the culture of customer service and assistance; and
5. Providing a positive experience for development and permit applicants.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Austin City Council and the Neighborhoods and Planning Committee will explore options for expanding and modifying our expedited permitting process to achieve more affordability and other community benefits.

ADOPTED: _____, 2015

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk