



Bellevue Development Committee

November 15, 2023

Meeting Notes

Networking and Welcome – Rebecca Horner

Rebecca Horner welcomed meeting attendees and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Permit Timelines & Development Update – Jake Hesselgesser

Jake Hesselgesser reviewed current permit timeline trends, focusing on city performance, development pipeline slowing, and current challenges. He also gave a development activity update and shared the level of activity which is lower than what it was in 2022. The forecast for 2024 reflects a continued slowdown in projects moving to construction. After the presentation, the following questions, answers, and suggestions were discussed:

- What permits are encompassed in the number of permits listed on volumes chart?
Answer – All permit activity throughout the entire system.
- Permit durations are taking longer because of extensions or applicants taking longer, is there data regarding how long the city takes versus how long applicants take?
Answer - We are currently doing analysis on that and don't have anything ready to share. Some of it is anecdotal and not across the board on all permit types.
- Do you keep a “shot clock” that shows when it’s in the city’s court and when it’s in the customer’s court?
We do collect data on this in our permit tracking system and will be working to report on that information.
- Do you have internal expectations and goals for review times?
Answer – Information on this was shared during the October meeting.
- What is the city seeing in terms of preapplication conferences?
Answer – We have seen a decline in the number of these applications starting in Q3 of 2022. That is an indication of development pipeline slowing, however there is a long watchlist of projects that remain in the system.
- Is the city studying how intersections will work with all the new development projects?
Answer – The transportation system is being planned to work for multimodal conditions including vehicles, bikes, buses, light rail, etc.

- Has there been any discussions about moving to All Way crosswalk intersections to move pedestrians quicker and help with right turns?

Answer – Not currently. Because of the large super blocks and intersections, it does not work well in many conditions and can create more congestion. However, there are a few intersections along the Grand Connection with All Way crosswalk conditions.

- Any further consideration for future permit extensions would be appreciated.
- Encourage the city to consider recognizing professionally prepared applications as being complete.

Items from Previous Meeting – Rebecca Horner, Jake Hesselgesser

Rebecca Horner provided an overview of the Development Services process improvement workplan and reviewed the background, workplan outcomes, prioritization criteria, and process for developing the workplan. Jake Hesselgesser provided an overview of 2023 workplan accomplishments, 2024 workplan initiatives and future docket items. Feedback from prior BDC meetings, customer experience surveys, and city staff was used to help inform workplan items. After the presentation, the following questions and items were discussed:

- One of the workplan items referenced accessibility of information, is that getting more towards what Seattle has in terms of having permit records available online?

Answer – Yes, that is a point the city would like to get to

- There are several items regarding onboarding new staff, who is doing the training?

Answer – Training is provided through a combination of HR staff, frontline managers, Assistant Directors, and programs offered through professional organizations such as the Washington Association of Building Officials and MyBuildingPermit.com.

- MyBuildingPermit.com was mentioned several times. It would be nice for Bellevue to help the region to have all jurisdictions doing things in a similar manner. This sentiment was one of the original objectives of the eCityGov Alliance and MyBuildingPermit.com which now has over 17 jurisdictions using a common permitting portal.
- Is there discussion among other cities to come up with a more unified system.

Answer – The premise behind MyBuildingPermit.com is to align the front-end customer process to be more uniform and there is coordination among the subscribing jurisdictions on this topic.

Code and Policy Update – Nick Whipple, Gregg Schrader

Nick Whipple provided an update on Council activity since the October 10 BDC meeting, noting four items that went to Council between October 10 and November 13.

There was a discussion about design review approval extensions. This item was before the City Council on November 6 and Councilmembers expressed interest in allowing design review approval extensions and finding the appropriate balance to allow flexibility for projects to remain active and vested while ensuring that as the Council updates codes and requirements, projects will, in time, be subject to changes to codes and requirements. The BDC provided feedback and Nick shared that the feedback from the BDC will be given to Council to inform future consideration of this Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA).

The recently adopted Downtown IOC was discussed briefly and staff plans to follow up with project contacts impacted by the IOC.

Gregg discussed the building and clearing & grading proposed extension ordinance and the feedback received from BDC stakeholders, which resulted in delaying the Council date until Feb. 8th, and drafting of a policy to allow a seamless reapplication process. The draft policy will be shared at the Jan. 10th BDC meeting so additional feedback can be provided prior to the Feb. 8th Council date.

Regarding requests for extension of Utility permits, the City has a duty to meet the requirements of the Dept of Ecology. If there is an extension of a permit, but the stormwater regulations have changed, it requires a stormwater system redesign.

Nick shared with the group upcoming opportunities to provide input on three different Code and Policy projects (Tree Canopy Amendments, Design Review Approval Extensions, and the Downtown IOC vesting language).

City Feedback – Rebecca Horner

Rebecca gave an update on Development Services recruitments. She mentioned that Fire contracts are in the works and that they are using consulting contracts to make this happen. It was shared that the committee appreciates the opportunity to give feedback before council meetings and feels like there is good communication. BDC meetings will be moving to quarterly meeting times. However, the city will keep the 2nd Wednesday of every month available for additional meetings if needed but they will be more focused on specific issues and will be shorter in length.

Development Community Feedback – Open Discussion

No additional feedback shared.

Closing and Next Meeting – Rebecca Horner

Rebecca Horner closed out the meeting and shared the next meeting will be January 10, 2024. Optional sub-team meeting times followed the close of the BDC meeting.

Optional: Sub-teams Meeting Time

Inspections Sub-team

Gregg shared the inspection themes. The group discussed each topic. Some of the things talked about included if something comes up during inspection and the issue is resolved, can the inspector approve it in the field without going back for plan review? The overall process was talked about and how it can be more efficient. Inspection oversight, capacity, and availability were discussed. A question was asked about the rigor of inspection in Bellevue regarding permits, compared to other places. The use of technology was also discussed for inspections. Gregg asked the group to prioritize the themes and “Inspection results conflicts with approved plans” was first and “Detail of inspection oversight” came in second. The group asked for timeliness of decisions from the city when things come up by making it a priority that can be addressed as soon as possible. Finally, the city asked how they can best support the team. The discussion included the need for an automated system, discrepancies between design/construction and review/inspection and what

to look for, especially when not every team submits the same details on their plans. The main themes were needing specifics and timeliness.

Permitting/Applications Sub-team

Jake reviewed the permitting and application themes and single-family building permit current required submittal documents. The group thought the permitting and application themes captured what needs to be reviewed. The main concern was to reduce permit timelines. The committee shared they would rather have to go through more during permitting, than during inspection. Best practices were discussed, is there a way to copy what has been done correctly? In regard to single family building permits required submittal documents the discussion revolved around plan sets, and whether they should be included as a single plan set versus multiple document types. Overall, it was mentioned that the plans need to be looked at in their entirety and there was consensus that moving to a single plan set would be beneficial and help reduce redundancies. It was also mentioned that new comments that were not previously on plans or communicated are showing up at times, and there should be clarification and clear guidelines.

Bellevue Development Committee Agenda Committee Members:

Patrick Bannon, Bellevue Downtown Association

Joe Fain, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce

Rebecca Horner, City of Bellevue

Patience Malaba, Housing Development Consortium Seattle-King County

Tim McKey, Sellen Construction

Veronica Shakotko, Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties

Note: The purpose of the BDC meetings is to have an inclusive forum where the development industry and others can provide input and collaborate with City staff about concerns, challenges and solutions related to permitting, entitlement and code amendments. Participants acknowledge and agree that while communications in these meetings may refer to an actual permit, land use or code amendment project, they are for illustrative purposes only. As such, these communications are not considered comments or responses for any associated project and will not be kept as part of the project record or file.