

# Development Services Process Improvement Update and Land Use Planning

## City Council Strategic Session

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**Nana Appiah**

Development Services Department Director

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# Development Services Primary Functions



Improve the City's Urban Form



Coordinate Land Use Planning and Administration



Guide Quality Development



Lead Coordination of Various City Departments



Perform Building Plan Checks and Complete Inspections

# List of City Council Focus Areas (Development Services)

## Policy and Process Improvements

- Improve Development Review Process to improve **efficiency**
  - Eliminate redundancies
- Improve department review **coordination**
  - Create a cohesive structure
- Use **data** for decision-making
- Improve the **business environment** for development review applicants
- Provide small **business assistance and support** (Ombudsman)

## **Major Themes** From Developer Feedback and Staff Evaluation (Align with City Council Focus Areas)

### **Policy Issues**

- Improve and expand administrative approvals for site plans and plats
- Revise stringent standards on major and minor site plan amendment approval process
- Streamline and adopt flexible infill and redevelopment standards
- Allow administrative approval/flexibility for parking standards
- Allow administrative flexibility for solid waste standards
- Minimize uncertainty in the Design Review Process
- Continue to publish review schedules

## **Major Themes** From Developer Feedback and Staff Evaluation (Align with City Council Focus Areas)

### **Process & Personnel Issues**

- Train staff to minimize providing new comments on resubmittals
- Improve review coordination among city departments
- Improve solid waste and fire responsiveness
- Enhance review meetings with applicants in addition to ensuring all needed staff attend meetings
- Improve junior staff autonomy to make review decisions
- Improve junior staff responsiveness
- Train staff to minimize making new comments on resubmittals

## Actions Taken

Improving  
Development  
Review Process  
(Efficiency)

### Actions Taken - Process

- Project acceptance and review timeline status email
- One-stop shop for civil, utilities, transportation, and solid waste reviews
  - Enhanced review meetings with applicant-ensure all needed staff attend
- Ombudsman Services
- Small business assistance services
- Website improvement (workflows)
- Dashboard reporting real-time data on review timelines: (**See Link**)

## **Actions Taken** Improved Development Review Process (Business Environment and Business Support)

### **Actions Taken - Process**

- Stakeholder Engagement (Continued)
  - Developer Advisory Forum Annual Lunch
  - Developer Advisory Forum Yearly Awards Breakfast
  - One-on-one meetings with Key Development Community Stakeholders
- Quarterly meetings with Partner City Department Directors

## **Actions Taken** Improve Development Review Process (Quality Development & Urban Form)

### **Actions Taken - Policy**

- Increase focus on Long Range Planning Strategies
- Zoning Code Text Amendments:
  - Manufactured Home and RV Subdivision Text Amendment
  - Subdivision Text Amendment
  - Form-Based Code Text Amendment
  - Data Center Text Amendment
  - Etc.



## Actions Taken - Personnel

### **Actions Taken** Improved Development Review Process (Coordination and Data Driven Decisions)

- Administrative restructuring to enhance staff empowerment and decision-making
  - Assistant Director of Planning-Current Planning/Development Review
  - Assistant Director of Planning-Long Range Planning Initiatives
  - Urban Design Planner (hiring)
  - Transportation Planner (hiring)
  - Administrative supervisor and team
- Project Managers
  - Data management/workflows
  - Ombudsman

## Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council &  
Developer Focus Areas)

### Proposed Actions - Policy

- Administrative Approvals - zoning code text amendments
  - Expand for minor and major site plan approval
  - Expand administrative site plan approvals
- Infill Ordinance zoning code text amendments
- Planned Area Development (PAD) zoning code text amendments
  - Use PAD to restrict uses
  - Minimize need for land use Development Agreements

# Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

## Proposed Actions - Policy

- Permit and Planning Entitlement- align expiration dates
- Building Code Update
- Cap on the number of review cycles prior to scheduling for a public hearing
- Review fees for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> reviews for unresponsiveness to review comments

# Long Range Planning Policy

## Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

### Placemaking Strategies

- City Entry/Gateway Plan
  - Identify Hierarchy
  - Develop Design Standards
  - Reinforce Community Identity
  - Create Sense of Place
- Wayfinding Plan
  - Guide and Highlight Key Destinations in the City
- Streetscape Design Standards and Guidelines
  - Establish Distinct Approaches for Key Corridors

# Long Range Planning Policy

## Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

### Corridor Planning

- Canal Master Plan
  - Establish a Long-term Vision
  - Transform Canals into Vibrant Public Spaces and Community Assets
- Active Transportation Plan
  - Collaborate with the Transportation and Other City Departments on Strategies to Create a Safe, Connected, and Accessible Network
  - Identify Walking, Biking, and Other Non-Motorized Travel

## Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

### Plans and Programs

- **MesaCONNECTED Plan** - Transit Oriented Development Plan Supporting High-Capacity Transit in West Mesa (Ongoing)
- **Rio Reimagined** - Local, State, Federal, and Tribal partners - Salt and Gila River Corridor Revitalization (Ongoing)
- **Redevelopment Plans Implementation-** As Part of Team (Ongoing)
- **Section 106 Programmatic Agreement** (3/2026)

## Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

## Summary of Continuous Improvement Initiatives

### ➤ **Completed**

- One-Stop Shop Review (Phase I)
- Ombudsman Services

### ➤ **Ongoing**

- Small Business Assistant
- Resubmittal Review Reduced
- Zoning Inspector (continuation)
- DIMES Improvement (resubmittals)

### ➤ **Stakeholder Engagement**

- Development Advisory Forum Annual Lunch
- Development Advisory Forum Awards Breakfast

# Review Timelines





	Rezoning	Design Review Board	Board of Adjustment	Pre-Submittal	Annexation	Administrative Review-Minor Site Plan/Design	General Plan Amendment	Land Division/ Subdivision/ Development	Commercial Plan Review	Residential Plan Review	Residential Standardized Plot Plans
All information in this table is presented in calendar days.											
Mesa	14	14	14	14	14	30	14	14	30	16	8
Gilbert	41	41	30	N/A	41	31	56	41	15	15	6
Phoenix	30-first rev. 15-resub.		60	28	90	30-first rev. 15-resub.	30-first rev. 15-resub.	30	25-Minor 35-Medium 45-Major	30	5
Scottsdale	Custom Review Schedule	Custom Review Schedule	Custom Review Schedule	Custom Review schedule	Custom Review Schedule	Custom Review Schedule	Custom Review Schedule	Custom Review Schedule	(31) 10-admin + 21- substantive	21	(31) 10-admin + 21- substantive
Chandler	20	N/A	20	15	20	20	20	20	20 days	20-MF 10-SF	10
Tempe	19	19	19	19	N/A	19	19	19	±25/valuation	±19/valuation	N/A
Queen Creek *+5d review	30*	N/A	30*	14*	30*	30*	30*	30*- Pre-plat 22*- Final Plat 22* -Lot Split	22	9	5

## Summary of Staff Recommended Action



Pursue related code amendments



Improve coordination among departments



Continue strong coordination with ED and the brokerage community



Improve staff training for DSD, Solid Waste, and Transportation staff to improve decision making



Develop onboarding program for new developers

# Thank you

