



City of
PORTLAND, OREGON

Development Review Advisory Committee

DRAC Service Levels Subcommittee
MINUTES
Wednesday, September 7, 2016

Subcommittee Members Present:

City Dietz, Water Bureau
Rob Humphrey, DRAC Vice Chair
Maryhelen Kincaid, DRAC Chair
Kurt Krueger, PBOT
Mitch Nickolds, BDS
Paul Scarlett, BDS
Justin Wood, DRAC

Other City Staff Present:

Ross Caron, BDS
Andy Peterson, BDS
Deborah Sievert Morris, BDS

Subcommittee Members Absent:

John Hasenberg, ORA
Elisabeth Reese Cadigan, BES
Kathy Sharp, BHR

Handouts

- Draft 07-14-16 Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
- FY 2015-16 Cumulative Major Workload Parameters
- June 2016 Monthly Major Workload Parameters
- July 2016 Monthly Major Workload Parameters
- Current BDS Service Levels – August 2016
- Hiring Timeline
- BDS Workload Measures at a Glance – July 2016

Convene Meeting

DRAC Vice Chair Rob Humphrey convened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Subcommittee members approved the July 14, 2016 Subcommittee meeting minutes.

Recap from Last Meeting / Discussion

Mr. Humphrey initiated a discussion on progress on service levels since the Subcommittee last met in July. He said that he has noticed significant improvement in timelines for some services in the last few weeks, particularly pre-issuance checks. Andy Peterson (BDS) said contract staff has been added specifically to work on pre-issuance checks, plus four new permanent staff have been added, which has made a difference. Existing staff has also been working significant overtime hours.

Deborah Sievert Morris (BDS) said that 42 permanent staff positions have been filled since the end of May 2016. BDS has a contract with CMTS, Inc. to provide plan review and technician staff. BDS will soon publish larger solicitations for temporary personnel contracts for plan review, engineering, inspections, and land use review.

Mr. Humphrey asked what BDS can do going forward to prevent the kinds of delays in services that have been experienced in the last several months. Mr. Peterson said the bureau can be more forward-looking in terms of permanent staff hires, as well as short-term and long-term contracts.

Maryhelen Kincaid (DRAC Chair) asked how BDS's staffing ramp-up impacts the other development bureaus, and whether the large workload leads to slowdowns because the other bureaus can't staff up. Mr. Peterson said the other bureaus are working on addressing staffing needs where slowdowns are occurring.

Kurt Krueger (PBOT) said they're putting in a lot of overtime to keep up, but that's not a long-term solution. He made a request in June 2016 to open a revolving recruitment for staff positions in need, and just got approval this past week. Slowdown also occurs because the Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) won't allow City bureaus to start prepping for the hiring process until the positions have been approved by the City Council. He will be requesting positions in the City's fall Budget Monitoring Process (BMP), but won't be able to start prepping to hire until the Council approves the BMP in November. Mr. Humphrey noted this as an action item for follow-up by the Subcommittee.

Justin Wood (DRAC) discussed communication amongst/between bureaus regarding future development projects that will be coming. Mr. Peterson talked about permit volume and ongoing trends, such as inclusionary zoning coming Feb. 1, 2017.

Mr. Humphrey discussed the Subcommittee's ultimate goal and how to measure success. For him, success will be the contraction of the timeline shown in the handout **Hiring Timeline**. He encouraged Subcommittee members and City staff to think outside the box as far as solutions to the problem. BDS Director Paul Scarlett said that BHR will have to be involved in any solution; they can't be circumvented. However, being able to prepare for the hiring process prior to positions being approved by City Council will significantly reduce the time it takes to get people onboard. Ms. Kincaid suggested that City Council needs to be made aware of the issues.

Cindy Dietz (Water) said that the bureaus need to be consistent and cohesive in communicating about the problems and possible solutions. She said a key part of the message is feedback from developers, the DRAC, other stakeholders regarding the issues. Ms. Dietz noted that the **Hiring Timeline** handout reflects the best-case scenario; for example, it has taken over a year for her to get two new positions approved.

Ms. Dietz said the infrastructure bureaus are challenged to add development review-related positions because of competition from the other parts of their bureaus. Mr. Scarlett suggested that development review positions from all the bureaus need to be viewed/presented holistically, rather than piecemeal, with the same message being communicated by all the bureaus. Ms. Dietz said positions from all the bureaus cannot be presented in a single budget package, but can be communicated in the context of the big picture regarding development review.

Mr. Scarlett discussed colocation – the bureaus are all located together, but the budgets and funding mechanisms are still separate. Attendees discussed how to approach budget requests in a more cooperative, coordinated way between the bureaus.

Mr. Peterson said that annually, BDS receives permits valued at approximately \$2.5 billion. City Council needs to be aware and see that development is an economic driver and represents an ongoing tax base. Mr. Scarlett said that the challenge is getting development on the radar in the City's budget development process, and he expressed hope that the Subcommittee and the DRAC can help bring the message forward. Ms. Kincaid discussed the opposition to development from some in the community, and the need to put development in a positive light. It won't be viewed as important as police/fire/parks, but at least get its due.

Mr. Krueger suggested that the DRAC can send a letter to the City Council summarizing this discussion. Mr. Scarlett said that preparing a report to City Council would be more likely to get notice and traction.

Mr. Humphrey said that if the developers, DRAC, City staff, etc. could go before Council together and communicate the issues and the impact on development, it would have a greater impact. Mr. Wood said it would be better to do this after Mayor Wheeler takes office, as he seems open to these issues. Ms. Kincaid said he has expressed interest in hearing from the DRAC. She suggested going to Commissioner Saltzman first to get his support.

The Subcommittee agreed to move forward with writing a report to City Council; the timing of presenting at Council will be determined.

Attendees also discussed BDS reaching out to developers regularly to get a sense of what is in the development pipeline in future months. Mr. Humphrey suggested a group of 20 or so people in various sectors of the development industry.

It was agreed that representatives from Fire and Parks would be invited to future Subcommittee meetings and brought onboard with the process.

The next Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled for later in September. Mr. Humphrey asked attendees to email him with what they want from the Subcommittee.

Next Subcommittee Meeting: TBD
Minutes prepared by Mark Feters, BDS