



ASSISTANT CITY
MANAGER

Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council Members
Douglas Faseler, City Manager

From: Rick Cortes, Assistant City Manager

Subject: Discussion and Consideration of Development Services Center

Date: August 9, 2017

Staff would like to submit for City Council consideration the conceptual design and layout for the proposed Development Services Center. The Development Services Center will house all development related activities ranging from planning, permits, building inspections, code compliance, health inspection, and GIS mapping. The facilities will also house city engineering activities, capital projects management, project inspectors, and associated staff.

There are many reasons for this proposed facility; however, one of the most pressing reasons is the lack of space in the current facility for both the staff and the many customers they receive daily. The different departmental functions for both departments are dispersed throughout all three levels of City Hall, leading to fractured delivery of services. There is not a central receiving area or lobby in City Hall for the many customers that are serviced by these two departments and many of the offices are located in the basement, which is not accessible to customers. Other offices are shared by multiple staff members. This results in staff meeting with customers in hallways or searching for open conference rooms that may be available, causing disruption to the other staff located in City Hall.

The volume of customers as the City grows is increasing rapidly. The Permit Technicians issued 2,502 permits in 2015 and 2,895 in 2016. At mid-year 2017 they had already issued 1,614 permits with expectations to reach over 3,000 before the year ends. Most of these permits are issued to walk-in customers. Garage sale permits alone account for over 800 customers a year. In addition to permit customers, the departments receive daily walk-in customers for planning, capital projects, building codes, and code compliance. Development meetings with customers have increased from 49 in 2015, to 72 in 2016 and 84 in 2017 with over 4 months still remaining in the year. Since there is not a lobby, the customers must wait in the hallway in front of the permit counter where staff is assisting other customers. The new facility is designed to address all of these issues by providing a spacious lobby area with direct access to the permits counter, a large conference room and three smaller meet-me rooms to meet with customers daily.

Customers will have quick and convenient access to services as they walk into the lobby area directly from the front door of the new Development Services Center.

In the engineering and capital projects area, project coordination and planning has increased significantly over the past several years. In 2012, staff was coordinating and providing inspections for 19 capital projects compared to 45 projects in 2017. Please note that City and TXDOT capital projects require frequent use of meeting space. Meeting spaces that have become more difficult to reserve since the loss of one conference room in City Hall since the appointment of a City PIO.

Please be advised that the facility design is a culmination of extensive meetings and dialogue between staff and TSG Architects (TSG). This dialogue assisted staff in determining departmental needs, and allowing staff the ability to address those needs through the design of the proposed facility. In an effort to obtain as much information as possible, both the Planning Director and City Engineer took the opportunity to meet with their respective staffs to gather input on departmental needs; this information was also utilized in the design of this proposed facility. Additionally, staff along with TSG took the opportunity to visit both the San Antonio and New Braunfels development centers to research each City's development centers so design characteristics could be incorporate into our design to help improve our service delivery.

Based on this input, the proposed design facility will be approximately 10,100 square ft. and will contain 10 offices, 2 conference rooms, an open cubicle area with 8 assigned workstations, 4 unassigned workstations, and space for 4 additional workstations. The facility will also contain open work areas, plan review sections, breakroom, full restrooms, and room for future growth, with four exits from the building. The facility will also be fully IT integrated allowing for better utilization of time during weekly development meetings and better service delivery. Estimated cost for this facility renovation is \$2,900,000. The projected renovation costs includes but is not limited to architectural services, building renovations, abatement, demolition, structural modifications, furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE) , information technology services, and security. Also attached for your review is a draft schedule for this project. Please feel free to call should you have any questions.

Cc: Pamela Centeno, Planning Director
Joe Ramos, City Engineer
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