
AB+C Portal Reverts to Previous Version to Address Performance Issues

Following an upgrade over the weekend, a number of customers experienced performance issues with the new [Austin Build + Connect \(AB+C\) Portal](#). Our team is working to address those issues. The AB+C Portal has reverted to the previous version. We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate your patience as we continue taking steps to improve your customer experience.

Multiple Initiatives Underway to Improve Development Process Timelines

As recent census data confirmed, Austin continues to grow quickly. Our ever-changing skyline and demand for housing and new commercial developments are testament to that growth. This high volume of development has contributed to longer timelines for some Development Service Department (DSD) services.

While specific process times change regularly, we want to keep customers informed about current trends and update you on steps we are taking to address process delays. In general, high volumes of new projects and staffing shortages in some areas have been the main contributing factors. Since receiving City Council approval for new positions in June, DSD has been recruiting, training and hiring vigorously. As we take the time to get new staff trained and adept in their respective roles, we also continue to improve processes, on both the customer side and behind the scenes, to help the work go more quickly and smoothly. We are monitoring closely for potential effects of the current COVID-19 surge on staffing and operations, and we will let you know if significant impacts look likely.

Intake: This area is currently experiencing significant delays, contributing to longer cycle times overall. Following recent and ongoing hiring, we expect new staff to be fully trained in three to six months. Process improvements, much like those recently implemented with the Service Center webform, are also underway.

Current estimated Intake processing times:

- Residential: 8-11 business days
- Commercial: 16 business days
- Land Use: 3-5 business days

Plan Review: Residential, Commercial and most of Land Development Review are generally operating within target timelines. Update Fridays, which DSD began as a pilot in January to enable staff to dedicate Fridays solely to reviewing project updates, have played a key role in reducing Residential and Commercial plan review backlogs. Additional staffing and support, along with some internal process changes, also have helped improve turnaround times. Site Plan, environmental, drainage and water quality reviews are currently experiencing some delays.

Current estimated Plan Review processing times:

- Residential: 23-24 business days
- Commercial: One business day, seven business days, 15-25 business days (depending on type of project review)
- Site Plan Review: 20-30 business days

Meetings for Expedited Plan Review currently take about nine weeks to schedule due to high volumes, increased interest in the service, and limited appointment availability. A third review team is being added to expand appointment availability. Expedited reviews occur during scheduled meetings, so actual review times are not affected.

Service Center: Processing times in the Service Center have improved but are still taking longer than preferred as hiring and training continue. Meanwhile, current staff has been working overtime to help address the backlog of requests.

Current estimated processing times for webform requests are averaging about eight business days, with AB+C online and Temporary Certificate of Occupancy requests averaging three business days. These process timeframes generally fluctuate between two and five days.

Other Processes: Portions of other service areas are impacted by similar factors. Site Plan Exemptions, License Agreements, and Tree Reviews are all taking steps to reduce processing times. Staff increases and some technology improvements, where needed, are underway in those areas as well.

Council Approves City Budget for FY 2022, Development Fees Stay Flat

Last week, the Austin City Council approved a \$4.5 billion City budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, which begins October 1. This total includes a \$70 million budget for Development Services.

DSD's FY 2022 budget includes plans for several improvements, including continued technology upgrades to systems that drive the development process, enhancements to customer communication systems, and additional process improvements for a better and faster customer experience. It also includes the addition of Alarm Permitting, which transferred to DSD's budget earlier this year from the Austin Police Department. DSD development-related fees will not increase in FY 2022.

A high volume of development activity necessitated a mid-year funding request for additional staff in June, and these positions are being filled currently.

Thank you for your continued interest in Development Services topics.

City of Austin Development Services Department
