

Streamline Sacramento – The City's Development Process Improvements Program

Potential Actions Table (January 2026)

City of Sacramento

Overview: Streamline Sacramento is a 2025 initiative spearheaded by Mayor McCarty and Councilmember Pluckebaum to identify improvements to the City's development approval process with the overarching goal of increasing the supply and decreasing the cost of housing. Streamline Sacramento is a customer-driven, cross-departmental effort (Community Development (CDD), Public Works (PW), Utilities (DOU), Fire, and Finance) focusing on all aspects of the building permit process from submittal of building permit applications, issuance of building permit, to plan review, inspections and final inspection/certificate of occupancy. This Potential Actions Table reflects the input received to date from the development community. These actions focus on ways to improve consistency, timeliness and to make the development experience as efficient and certain as possible.

This table is intended to be a working document that will be updated regularly to prioritize actions, identify leads, and track progress.

Status Legend: Exploring; Implementing; Instituted; Ongoing.

Process & Potential Action	Lead	Status	Potential Action Summary
Customer Service			
Small Business Liaison Program	CDD/Building	Instituted (October 2025) & Ongoing	<p>In Fall 2024, the Building Division introduced a dedicated liaison program for small business owners and the Downtown Partnership's "Calling All Dreamers" initiative. In 2025, this program expanded staffing to further support small businesses navigate the complexities of the building permitting process and provide educational training.</p> <p>To assist with navigating the process, in September 2025, the Building Division created a Small Business Liaison webpage providing an overview of the steps required to obtain a building permit and complete construction within the City of Sacramento. The new webpage outlines the steps and applicable resources in one place, including checklists for restaurants and tenant improvements (www.cityofsacramento.gov/buildingsmallbusiness). The Small Business Liaison program was presented to the Downtown Partnership's Calling All Dreamers Program and to the City's Community Ambassadors Program in October 2025 and to the Stockton Blvd Partnership in January 2026.</p> <p>In the first quarter of 2026, the Small Business Liaison team will connect with business associations and Property and Business Improvement Districts (PBIDs) and offer quarterly permitting 101 classes for new or expanding small businesses that will require tenant improvements.</p>

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Minor Alterations & Improvements Processes	CDD/Building	Implementing	Review the City's current Electronic Over-the-Counter (E-OTC), Facility Permit Program (FPP) and online minor permit programs for opportunities to improve or expand services. The E-OTC program will be replaced by the Small Project Rapid Review program (SPRR) by the second quarter of 2026. SPRR will complete project reviews within 72 hours and customers will be able to submit SPRR application 24 hours a day. The E-OTC has limited hours (10am-3pm, Monday-Friday). Additionally, increase customer awareness of FPP.
Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys	CDD/Building	Ongoing & Instituted (July 2025)	Continue to administer and incorporate feedback from Building Division Customer Satisfaction Surveys for counter services, inspections, plan review and project management. In July 2025, QR codes for the survey were placed at the public counter and added to email signatures.
Staff Contact Information & Responsiveness	All Development-Related Departments	Instituted (March 2025)	Staff communicating with the development community should have phone and email address in signature block of each email and be available by phone. Additionally, all correction notices list the phone and email address of the plan reviewer in the letterhead. In May 2025, CDD instituted standard email signatures.
Application Forms (Consolidate & Simplify)	CDD/Building	Ongoing & Instituted (July 2025)	Consolidate and simplify applications, forms and checklists, and remove duplicative fields. The Building Division constantly updates and revises forms strategically so as not to disrupt normal business operations. In conjunction with Streamline Sacramento efforts and the triennial code update to the 2025 California Building Standards Codes, the Building Division will consolidate and make it easier for customers to identify the appropriate forms/applications. In July 2025, Minor Permit Application Form Bundles were added to the webpage to make it easier for contractors and homeowners to find all the forms required for each common minor permit type.

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Information Bulletins & Reference Materials	CDD/Building	Instituted (September 2025) & Ongoing	<p>Consider instituting Information Bulletins that are published on the City's webpage to update the development community on the latest building codes, construction practices, safety standards and regulatory changes. As an example, see City of San Diego's webpage and sample bulletin. The City currently has informational guides and forms that are updated every triennial code cycle. The 2025 Building Code went into effect in January 2026. The Building Division is in the process of reformatting and reorganizing these documents to make them easier to locate. How-to videos to assist customers with the electronic building permit application submittals are available and will be promoted via the webpage and email updates.</p> <p>The Building Division created a new FAQs webpage to address various questions related to the building permit process, including links to step-by-step videos in a single location. The page was published in September 2025. The webpage will continue to evolve with new content to help customers.</p>
300 Richards Blvd. Public Counter Operation & Virtual Appointments	Multiple Departments	Instituted (May & October 2025) & Exploring	<p>Public counter hours of operation: Tues-Thurs, 9am-3:30pm; cashier services also available by appointment Mondays and Fridays. A review of customer trends and appointment utilization indicated that only 8% of customers use the public counter and appointments are readily available. Customers can currently utilize the online portal 24/7. Effective May 1, 2025, expanded services for walk-in customers were implemented, while still prioritizing those with appointments.</p> <p>In October 2025, staff initiated a 6-month pilot program to expand public counter services on Mondays and Fridays. At the conclusion of the pilot in April 2026, staff will assess customer usage trends and costs of delivering the enhanced service and make revisions accordingly.</p>
Increased Coordination and Communication between City Departments and Agencies (e.g., utility providers, sanitation district, county health department)	CDD/Building & Multiple Departments	Instituted (September 2025)	<p>Explore options for the Building Division's Project Management Section to facilitate enhanced coordination and communication processes throughout lifecycle of development process between departments and agencies. Coordination meetings have been established with the Sacramento County Health Department to improve city/county coordination and support restaurants navigating the permitting process. Bi-monthly coordination meetings have also been established with the City departments that review development projects and SMUD, PG&E, and SacRT.</p>

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Fill & Retain Development Related Vacant Positions	Multiple Departments	Ongoing & Exploring	<p>Identify barriers and develop solutions for development related vacancies. CDD's Building Division has worked actively to reduce their vacancy rate. As of January 2026, the vacancy rate is 17% compared to 26% in August 2025. Public Works' Engineering Services Division has a 24% vacancy rate.</p> <p>Exploring Building Division job shadowing and internship programs with local high schools and community colleges to establish an additional job readiness pipeline for students.</p>
AI-Powered Tools for Increased Efficiency & Customer Service	CDD/Building	Implementing	<p>The Building Division is entering into a contract with "Ichi"—AI Co-Pilot for Building Code Compliance that will assist implementation and training of building plan review and building inspections. Staff will also continue to monitor the capabilities of other AI-powered tools that could answer applicant's pre-application questions, simplify the customer portal, ensure applicants submit complete application packages and reduce plan review cycles. SacGPT, the City's AI-powered search summarization was made available to the public on December 18, 2025, and can assist customers with easily finding information in the City's Code and other resources available on the City's website.</p>
Shelf Ready Accessory Dwelling Unit Plans	CDD/Building	Instituted (December 2025)	<p>In 2023, the City developed Shelf Ready Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Plans. These plans are free to residents and are available as a Studio, One Bedroom and Two Bedroom. In December 2025, these plans were updated to provide additional flexibility (premanufactured roof trusses, ductless mini-split heating/cooling), reduce construction costs, and support more efficient project delivery. Approximately 30 Shelf Ready ADU Plans were submitted in 2025.</p>
Building Permit Application Submittal & Plan Review			
Accessory Dwelling Unit Optional Zoning Review	CDD/Planning	Implementing	<p>Pursuant to state law, a building permit is the only required approval before Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) construction may begin. However, prior to submitting a building permit application, applicants are encouraged to take advantage of the ADU Optional Zoning Review (Review) to verify that applicable objective zoning standards are met before spending significant time and money on a building permit application. The cost of the Review is \$117. To encourage additional participation in the Review, effective July 1, 2026, it will be offered for free.</p>
Avoidance of Plan Review Comments After Cycle 1	CDD/Building	Instituted (January 2025)	<p>Where feasible and not life safety issues, strive to avoid additional plan review comments that were not made during Cycle 1 (unless project is revised between cycles).</p>

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In-Field Revisions & Corrections	CDD/Building	Instituted (January 2025)	Allow in-field revisions or corrections in certain circumstances instead of requiring a full plan revision.
Request for Information (RFI) Process	CDD/Building	Instituted (January 2025)	Revisited RFI procedures and instituted the ability to proceed with inspections for minor RFI clarifications.
Proactively Monitor Project Applications & Implement Triage Plans	CDD/Building	Instituted (September 2025)	Proactively resolve challenges for projects that appear stalled. A new automated internal report was created in Accela in September 2025 to easily identify the number of days a project has been with the applicant. This report will make it easier for staff to proactively intervene with projects that have stalled and have been in Plan Check Wait status for an extended time. Additionally, the Accela permitting software automatically sends notifications to customers 30 and 15 days prior to permit expiration. See also “Best Practices & Procedures for Plan Review & Reducing Number of Plan Review Cycles.”
Meet or Exceed Plan Review Timelines	CDD, PW (Development Engineering, Transportation & Urban Forestry) Fire, DOU	Instituted (November 2025) & Ongoing	<p>Cycle Times for Plan Review have been established based on valuation and cycle #. Plan review staff is on-time or early 98.5% of the time. The department's target is 90%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Created guidance documents and hold monthly training sessions for consistency & training of plan review staff. – Offer preliminary/pre-submittal meeting with applicants to get input from departments prior to submitting building permit application. – Training staff as back-up reviewers or establishing on-call plan reviewers list for all disciplines to address capacity/vacancies/absences. Urban Forestry has trained additional arborists to conduct plan review. DOU, and Public Works now have contract plan reviewers in place.
Implement Cycle Review Times for Lot Mergers/Adjustments and Parcel Maps	PW/ Development Engineering	Implementing	Public Works, Development Engineering is in the process of overhauling and modernizing the Development Engineering module and workflows in the City's development software management system (Accela) and PW customer portal, for the ability to create workflows, automated due dates, automatic email applications status emails, etc., for lot merger/adjustments, parcel maps, final maps, substantial conformance review, easements, etc.

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Best Practices & Procedures for Plan Review & Reducing Number of Plan Review Cycles	CDD/Building	Instituted (August 2025) & Ongoing	<p>After the 2nd Cycle of Plan Review, customers are encouraged to meet with staff to resolve the remaining corrections. At the conclusion of the 3rd Cycle of Plan Review, Plan Review Manager triages outstanding correction items to determine if intervention is necessary. Projects needing intervention will be required to meet with plan review staff prior to subsequent submissions. Meetings are intended to discuss outstanding correction items with the design professional to minimize the number of future submissions.</p> <p>Establish customer education strategies and new procedures, as necessary. See also "Information Bulletins & Reference Materials." The Building Division currently offers free in-person or virtual pre-submittal meetings to answer project specific questions. Potentially consider enhancements.</p>
Prequalified Architectural Submittal System (PASS)	CDD/Building	Instituted (September 2025)	<p>Applicants enrolled in PASS can bypass the submittal package review step (triage) and are able to go directly to Plan Review. Five Building Division staff completed the PASS training and obtained certifications. Information about the PASS program is available on the City's new FAQ webpage.</p>
Self-Certification Program	Multiple Departments	Instituted (January 2026) & Exploring	<p>Explore implementing a self-certification program which allows registered professionals to bypass the plan review process by taking responsibility for and certifying a project's compliance with building code, standards and ordinances.</p> <p>The City has implemented the requirements of AB 671, which became effective January 1, 2026, establishing an accelerated building plan approval process for restaurant tenant improvements. Under AB 671, jurisdictions must approve/deny complete building permit applications prepared by a qualified professional certifier within 20 business days or the application is deemed approved. The City is evaluating the feasibility of similar self-certification approaches for other minor tenant improvement projects, including B (office), M (retail), and S (warehouse) occupancies.</p>
Parcel Map Waivers	PW/Development Engineering & CDD/Planning	Implementing	<p>Development projects that are subdividing a lot into two or more parcels are subject to the Subdivision Map Act and associated public hearing requirements, including a notification of a parcel map to City Council. The Subdivision Map Act and the City's Planning and Development Code permit a parcel map waiver for parcel maps of 1-4 lots, but to date it has not been utilized. A parcel map waiver can save up to three months of processing time and associated costs by avoiding the City Council notification step. By July 1, 2026, staff will publish a new Parcel Map Waiver application detailing submittal requirements and information about the review process, including the time-saving opportunity. At publishing, staff will advertise to the development community to increase awareness.</p>

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Sign Permits	CDD/Building	Instituted (August 2025)	Improved efficiency and tracking of sign permit applications by migrating the process from email to the electronic plan check portal (EPC). The EPC allows real time tracking to ensure approval targets are being met.
Addressing	CDD/Building	Instituted (October 2025 & January 2026)	To significantly speed up the processing time for assigning new addresses for subdivision maps, staff revised the process to update addresses twice monthly in Accela, instead of the previous once a month process. A successful pilot was launched in August 2025 with the Department of Information Technology's Geographic Information Systems Section and in October 2025 the revisions became permanent. Additionally, as of January 2026, the process has sped up further by assigning new address every two weeks, instead of twice a month.
Financing			
Deferral and Reduction of Development Impact Fees	CDD/Building	Ongoing & Exploring	Citywide Impact Fee Reform adopted by Council in 2017 standardized impact fees, reduced certain impact fees (Transportation and Parks) and established the Fee Deferral Program. Fee Deferral Program allows developers to wait to pay impact fees until final inspections/certificate of occupancy from the Building Division. Established in 2018, a \$0 rate is applied to affordable dwelling units for City-controlled impact fees. SB-937, effective January 1, 2025, allows deferral of impact fees for affordable housing and projects with 10 or fewer dwelling units. As of December 2025, the City has received five SB-937 fee deferral applications for missing middle housing projects of up to four units. Explore options such as info sheets and early notifications to customers about available programs for deferring or reducing fees.
Community Facilities District (CFD)	Infrastructure Finance/PW/DOU	Exploring & Implementing	Consider revisions to CFD reimbursement/public bidding process/funding agreement language to expedite process. City Council has authority to suspend competitive bidding for each CFD reimbursement agreement. Developers are encouraged to initiate CFD formation early in the development process. Additionally, the City is in the process of creating a checklist to guide applicants through the process and steps needed when public financing is requested.
Flat Fees for PW, Offsite Plans	PW	Implementing	The Department of Public Works' (PW) Development Engineering Division is considering revising the fee structure for reviewing offsite plans from the current cost recovery system to a flat fee. This change would allow developers to better plan project finances and would decrease the burden on staff in administrating this fee. As an interim step, staff have modified the current deposit amount for FY25/26 Fee & Charge Report, effective July 1, 2025. In Summer 2026, PW anticipates kicking off a department-wide fee study. The contemplated flat fee will be fully evaluated at that time.

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Bond Opportunities for Land Development (BOLD) Program	Infrastructure Finance	Instituted (April 2025) & Ongoing	City Council authorized participation in the BOLD Program on April 8, 2025 (Resolution No. 2025-0092). BOLD is offered by the California Municipal Finance Authority (CMFA) which can be used to finance public impact fees and infrastructure required for new development within the City, allowing greater flexibility for the development community and will lessen the administrative burden on City staff. Two Standard-Form Agreements are being developed and those will be brought to Council in accordance with CMFA timelines.
Building Permit Issuance			
Instant Building Permit Issuance	CDD/Building	Instituted (April 2025) & Implementing	The Building Division's minor permit process now allows a contractor to self-certify and instantly receive a building permit for minor permits (e.g., water heater and residential PV solar with SolarAPP+). Compliance with code is verified through virtual or in-person inspection. Staff are in the process of expanding this program to allow instant building permit issuance for property owners seeking water heater permits and HVAC change outs. Anticipate implementation in the first quarter of 2026.
Demolition/Wrecking Permit	CDD/Building & Multiple Departments	Instituted (June 2025)	Building Division's Project Management Section has implemented an automated routing and approval process for demolition/wrecking applications to expedite permit approvals. New process effective June 16, 2025.

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Building & Offsite Inspections			
Alternate Water Systems Ordinance	CDD/Building	Instituted (December 2025)	<p>The City's Alternate Water Systems Ordinance required new graywater piping requirements for certain new commercial non-residential buildings that filed applications for building permits on or after July 1, 2023. These graywater piping requirements were instituted in part to offset potential job loss impacts to plumbers and pipefitters from the New Building Electrification Ordinance. However, enforcement of the City's New Building Electrification Ordinance was suspended in April 2023 because of a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision and is being deleted from Sacramento City Code. The graywater piping requirements have limited environmental benefit because there is no requirement to install a full treatment system to backfill water closets and urinals. Though there is a requirement to include a graywater system for subsurface irrigation, landscaping is typically limited for applicable projects. Additionally, the graywater piping requirements have been identified by the development community as a financial burden that could make projects such as hotels financially infeasible.</p> <p>On December 2, 2025, City Council rescinded the graywater piping requirements.</p>
Virtual Inspections	CDD/Building	Instituted (October 2025 & January 2026)	<p>Entered into a contract for virtual inspection software (VuSpex) for remote inspections and kicked off the project in July 2025. Virtual inspections went live on October 20, 2025, for Minor HVAC and Minor Water Heater residential web permits.</p> <p>Starting January 12, 2026, the virtual inspection program was expanded and will be required for certain residential web permit types (Minor HVAC, Minor Water Heater, Solar/PV, and EV Chargers). Additionally, optional virtual inspections have been added for residential re-roofs.</p>
Onsite & Offsite Inspections	CDD/Building/DOU/PW	Instituted (April 2025)	CDD, PW, and DOU consolidated the same mapping/improvement process for private street small lot Single-Family Housing (SFH) subdivision vs. standard public street SFH subdivision. This will simplify the process for developers who work on infill lot developments and is supporting the Missing Middle Housing (MMH) Interim Ordinance. Effective, April 2025, private streets as part of subdivisions to be shown on offsite plans and to be inspected by Public Works & Utilities/offsite inspectors.

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Building Inspection Process Efficiencies	CDD/Building /Fire	Instituted (March-December 2025)	Consider procedures for increasing inspection efficiency such as: 1) (Instituted, March 2025) conducting entire inspection in one visit, if feasible, instead of multiple 15-minute visits. Especially important for final inspections for multi-unit housing projects; 2) (Instituted, March 2025) Inspectors currently call 30 minutes before arrival. Appointment times are provided for virtual inspections.; 3) (Instituted, March 2025) Consider using third-party inspectors, as needed, to keep projects on track. 4) (Instituted August 2025) At the conclusion of the inspection, enter results into Accela in real time from the field to avoid any delays in moving to the next step. 5) (Instituted, December 2025) Developed an Inspection Tracker – an internal web-based dashboard for supervisors to track inspections and make schedule or inspector adjustments in real time, thereby preventing overloaded inspectors and the need for inspections to rollover to the next business day.
Inspections & Approved Building Plans	CDD/Building	Instituted (January 2025) & Implementing	Review process for ensuring project in the field matches plans approved during plan review process. See "Request for Information (RFI) Process" and "AI-Powered Tools for Increased Efficiency & Customer Service."
Issuance of Inspection Results	CDD/Building	Instituted (July 2025)	Consider policy for building inspectors to upload inspection results to both the portal and through email to contractor and developer. The project applicant currently receives email alerts of inspection results and can add additional email addresses to receive alerts of inspection results and other project milestones by emailing ezpermit@cityofsacramento.org or by contacting their project manager.
Building Inspection Certificate Trainings & California Building Standards Code, Consistent Interpretation	CDD/Building	Ongoing	The Building Division will continue to have staff-led International Code Council (ICC) certificate training programs and will have additional staff instructors receive ICC training certification. Exam preparation (e.g., plumbing, electrical) will continue to be contracted out. Ongoing weekly code uniformity sessions led in-office in an effort to provide consistency of interpretations of the field inspectors for our customers.

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Drone Assisted Building Inspections	CDD/Building	Exploring	Explore using drones to assist building inspectors in conducting inspections of hard-to-reach areas of buildings like rooftops and facades.
Final Inspection and Certificate of Occupancy			
Temporary Certificate of Occupancy & Safe to Stock	CDD/Building	Instituted (August 2025)	Builders are encouraged to first strive for a Certificate of Occupancy (CofO), but the City issues Temporary Certificates of Occupancy (TCOs) as necessary for portions or phases of the development to allow for early occupancy. To allow for greater flexibility, staff is moving forward with an alternative option to a TCO. Safe to Stock will allow installation of equipment and furniture and the opportunity to train staff prior to final inspection sign-off and the space being occupied. To expedite signoffs of TCOs and Safe to Stock, the Chief Building Official has authorized a second approver.