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MAYOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE NO. 19

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Subject: Development Services Streamlining and Modernization

INTRODUCTION

Los Angeles faces a housing crisis compounded by a development permitting process that is too often fragmented, unpredictable, and uncoordinated across departments. Despite policy improvements to incentivize housing production, the City's permitting infrastructure remains a barrier to development. Applicants navigate siloed departments each with their own requirements and touchpoints, creating delays that can make projects financially infeasible and drive investment to competing jurisdictions.

In recent years, the City has made tremendous progress towards addressing these challenges through coordination frameworks such as BuildLA, interdepartmental working groups, and commissioned studies. While these efforts have diagnosed systemic issues, there is much more we can do to deliver meaningful transformation.

This directive takes a comprehensive approach to development services reform across three key areas: technology improvements, procedural improvements, and customer service improvements to modernize and streamline how the City reviews and processes applications. Taken together, these reforms build upon the City's ongoing commitment to housing production, reflect lessons learned from other reform efforts, and respond directly to the barriers that applicants, developers, and investors have identified as impediments to building in Los Angeles.

Therefore, to move the City towards achieving the coordination, efficiency, predictability, and measurable performance improvements that our housing crisis demands, I hereby direct, that:

1. Technology Tools and Modernization. The following reforms deploy modern tools to reduce correction cycles, enable proactive departmental review, and improve the speed and accuracy of development services:

a. **AI-Assisted Pre-Plan Check.** Within 60 days of this directive, the Department of Building and Safety, with the assistance and collaboration of the Department of City Planning and the Information Technology Agency, shall initiate a City procurement process for the use of AI-powered tools for pre-plan check review.

i. This pre-plan check tool is intended to review application completeness and code compliance before an application is filed with the City.

ii. The Request for Proposal (RFP) must address, but not be limited to, the following considerations:

1. The project types and intended uses, such as pre-plan check completeness validation and code compliance reviews; the scope of regulations, including zoning and building codes; relevant local ordinances and regulations; and overall development review process workflow review and evaluation. Additionally, it should detail staff-facing dashboards with processing times, alongside comparative metrics to evaluate baseline versus post-implementation performance.

2. The RFP should address building permit clearances by all City departments that typically issue clearances for multi-family residential and commercial projects.

iii. Prior to formally initiating this procurement process, LADBS shall report to the Mayor's Office on identifying funding sources and any alternative approaches to procurement, including integration with the new LA Permitting System.

b. **Simultaneous Electronic Plan Review.** Within 30 days of this directive, the Department of Building and Safety shall begin technical implementation to provide its ePlan system access to all City departments that process building permit clearances.

- i. Concurrently, within 30 days of this Directive and in collaboration with Building and Safety, the Department of City Planning, Bureau of Engineering, Los Angeles Fire Department, Los Angeles Housing Department, Bureau of Sanitation, Bureau of Street Services, Department of Water and Power, and the Department of Transportation shall report back to my Office on implementing proactive review workflows. Each department's report shall address current barriers, technical requirements, workflow modifications, expected impact on processing timelines, and a phased implementation approach with timeline and resource requirements.
- ii. Where operationally feasible, departments with access to the ePlan system shall review submitted materials and issue applicable clearances proactively, without waiting for the project applicant to formally contact the clearance department in question.

2. Streamlining Procedures. The following reforms streamline and expedite how the City administers development review by expanding existing programs, reducing redundancies, and establishing clearer processes across departments and project types:

- a. **Expand Online Permits.** Within 45 days of this directive, the Department of Building and Safety shall report back to my Office on options to expand the current online Express Permit program to a wider range of permit and project types that do not require plan check review and that can be approved wholly online.
 - i. The report shall include, but is not limited to the following: technical feasibility assessments, eligibility criteria for projects potentially suited to an online review, approval processes required for implementation, potential AI integration, resource requirements, anticipated processing time reductions, and a recommended rollout strategy.
- b. **Expedited Affordable Housing.** The following provisions replace and supersede certain affordable housing provisions established in Executive Directive 1, ensuring these expedited permit review pathways remain a priority:

- i. All applicable City Departments shall conduct and conclude all reviews and inspections required for 100% Affordable Housing Projects or Shelters and to issue all appropriate ministerial approvals for such projects or Shelters within 60 days following the submission of the completed application. City Departments shall provide the applicant with all required changes or amendments on or before the 30th day following the submission of a completed application for such projects. To the extent practicable, all required ministerial reviews and approvals shall be conducted simultaneously, not sequentially, by all City departments so as to meet the 30 day and 60-day periods specified for such projects in this paragraph.
 - ii. All applicable City departments shall process clearances and utility releases related to building permit applications, certificates of occupancy, or temporary certificates of occupancy within 5 business days for 100% affordable housing projects and within 2 business days for Shelters.
 - iii. All applicable City departments shall maintain existing teams dedicated to processing and expediting 100% affordable housing projects so as to meet review timeframes specified for such projects in this Directive.
 - iv. For the purposes of provision 2.b of this Directive, “100 Percent Affordable Housing” is defined as a housing project with five or more units, and with all units affordable either at 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) or lower (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rent levels), or at mixed income with up to 20% of units at 120% of AMI (California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) rent levels) and the balance at 80% AMI or lower (TCAC rent levels).
- c. **Accelerating Housing Element Implementation.** Within 45 days of this directive, LADBS, City Planning and other relevant development services departments shall report back to my Office with recommendations of streamlining opportunities for projects processed under the Citywide Housing Incentive Program (CHIP).

- d. **Citywide Single-Family Standard Plans.** The Standard Plans program provides pre-approved architectural and engineering plan sets that property owners can select and implement without additional plan review.
- i. Single-family dwelling standard plans approved by LADBS for fire recovery rebuild pursuant to Executive Directive (ED) 13 shall be made available for use Citywide.
 - ii. Within 30 days of this directive, LADBS shall consolidate all standard plan programs within a single unified customer-friendly online portal for submitting and reviewing standard plans citywide, including but not limited to ADU standard plans and ED 13 standard plans.
 - iii. In addition, within 30 days of this directive, the Department of Building and Safety shall report back to my Office on expanding the Standard Plans Program, with the inclusion of standard plans for additional residential and accessory structure types, engagement of the development community to gather feedback on design needs, and recommend a prioritized rollout strategy based on demand, alignment with housing production priorities, and potential cost and timeline savings for applicants.
- e. **Citywide Tenant Improvement Self-Certification.** Within 45 days of this directive, LADBS shall implement a Citywide Self-Certification Pilot Program for projects involving a commercial tenant improvement that do not need a change of use. Implementation of the Citywide Self-Certification Pilot Program shall consider and incorporate where appropriate any applicable program parameters, audit requirements, and guidelines set forth pursuant to Emergency Executive Order 10.
- f. **Concurrent Urban Forestry Reviews.** The Bureau of Street Services' Urban Forestry Division shall conduct concurrent street tree removal review at the time of project entitlements pursuant to the Landscaping and Site Design Ordinance. This concurrent review may incorporate, but is not limited to, optional or mandatory virtual consultations, in-person consultation, and site visits. Implementation may be phased or contain initial limitations on types of projects that are initially eligible for concurrent entitlement review.

- g. **Virtual Inspections.** Within 60 days of this directive, the Department of Building and Safety shall expand the scope and increase the availability of virtual inspections as a supplement and replacement for in-person inspections, with a focus on expanding virtual inspections for certain commercial permits and additional permit types for residential projects.
- i. Within 45 days of this directive, the Department of Building and Safety shall report back with metrics on how many inspections per day are able to be conducted virtually as opposed to in person; as well as any staffing-related considerations on implementing further virtual inspections.
 - ii. In addition, LADBS shall establish an audit system to track any issues related to expanded virtual inspections and evaluate their effectiveness.
 - iii. Further, within 45 days of this directive, the Department of Water and Power, the Bureau of Contract Administration in coordination with the Bureau of Engineering, and the Los Angeles Fire Department shall report back to my Office with recommendations on expediting and improving the inspections process, with a focus on commercial, mixed-use and multi-family housing projects. The reports shall address measures to reduce inspection scheduling delays, identify opportunities for concurrent rather than sequential inspections, and reduce inspection comments that conflict with plan check approvals or conflicts between different inspectors.
- h. **Workstream Mapping.** Within 60 days of this directive, building upon the workstream mapping started under Executive Directive 7, the development services departments listed below shall coordinate to create a unified workstream documentation for multi-family housing:
- i. Department of Building and Safety, Department of City Planning, Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Contract Administration, Los Angeles Fire Department, Los Angeles Housing Department, Bureau of Sanitation, Department of Transportation, Department of Water and Power, and other departments as needed.

- ii. The workstream documentation process shall result in a single consolidated process map encompassing all departments' review processes, with a clear identification of all departmental touchpoints and realistic timeline expectations.
 - iii. Where workstream maps already exist, departments shall supplement those with any additional detail or scope required by this directive.
- i. Reduce and Simplify Permit Clearances.** All development services departments shall review the existing Clearance Summary Handbook, and report back to my Office within 45 days with the following:
- i. A list of all required clearances for multi-family and mixed-use housing projects;
 - ii. A description of the purpose and need of each clearance;
 - iii. Identification of any redundant or unnecessary clearances; and
 - iv. Recommendations on how to reduce the number and complexity of required clearances. These recommendations should address the following distinctions, and other relevant approaches to implementation:
 - 1. Changes that can be made administratively by the department;
 - 2. Changes that require adoption of an ordinance by the City Council or formal action by another decision-making body; and
 - 3. Clearances that have connection to state and/or federal law.
- j. CAO Inventory of Vacant City-Owned Land.** Within 30 days of this directive, the City Administrative Officer (CAO) shall report back to my Office with a comprehensive list of vacant city-owned land suitable for temporary construction staging areas for development projects.
- i. The inventory shall build upon the list delivered by the City Administrative Officer in response to Executive Directive 3.

- ii. The inventory shall include address, Assessor's Parcel number, acreage, General Plan Land Use designation, and zoning for each identified parcel.
- iii. I direct all City Departments to fully prioritize inquiries and requests regarding this inventory for immediate response.
- iv. This section does not apply to active recreational sites under the control of the Department of Recreation and Parks that are utilized for public recreation, or to land that is utilized as trails for public recreation.
- v. I further direct LAHD to report back to my Office within 30 days with recommendations on improving and accelerating the City's RFP process for selecting housing developers for City-owned land.
- vi. I further hereby establish a City-Owned Land Taskforce, under the direction of the Mayor's Office, to establish a structured, standardized evaluation framework to determine development viability across the listed of identified sites. This Working Group shall be formed within 30 days of the issuance of this Directive, and shall provide its recommendations within 60 days of its formation.

3. Enhanced Customer Service. The following reforms address the experience of applicants navigating the development process, reducing uncertainty, improving communication, and ensuring that City departments provide clear, consistent, and timely guidance throughout the permitting and inspection process:

a. **LADBS Streamlining and Enhanced Customer Service.** Within 30 days of this directive, the Department of Building and Safety, in coordination with the Department of City Planning and the Los Angeles Fire Department where applicable, shall report back to my Office on implementing the following customer service enhancements and streamlining measures:

i. **Re-Stamping.**

- 1. Limiting the City departments required to stamp building permit plans to only the Department of City Planning and the Los Angeles Fire Department.

2. The Department of City Planning and Los Angeles Fire Department shall assess the feasibility of allowing licensed professionals to self-certify plan check re-stamps within certain parameters, as recommended by each department.
- ii. Implementation of a new Department of Building and Safety service ensuring that applicants and their design professionals have access to at least one 15-minute consultation with their assigned plan checker prior to the plan checker returning the first round of corrections. The report may include recommendations on phasing in of this new service, eligible project types, and other implementation considerations.
- b. **LADWP Energization Process Improvement.** While LADWP has done commendable work, where applicable, to reduce building timelines and costs through Project Powerhouse and its Fair Share Line Extension program, not all development projects meet their respective requirements. Therefore, I request that working with the Mayor's Office, LADWP will participate in a New Business Task Force to identify and remediate barriers associated with new power business. This task force should take in and consider feedback from external stakeholders and industry experts.

In addition, within 45 days of this directive, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power shall report back to my Office on the following customer service enhancements:

- i. Implementation progress of New Power Business process improvements, including LADWP's concierge program, which is designed to guide project applicants through City processes, addressing common communication gaps between applicants and the various LADWP units.
- ii. Detailed description of all steps needed for a housing project to receive water and power service, respectively, including the various handoffs between LADWP units, and recommendations to reduce and simplify the number of steps and time involved in establishing water and power service.

- iii. Creation of an informational customer service portal that provides applicants with reliable and up-to-date project status, scheduling for energization appointments and inspections, accessible via the department's website, BuildLA (once operational), or other publicly accessible platforms.
- iv. Data requirements for forecasting energization demand at an area-wide or neighborhood-wide level, the technical approach for receiving aggregate project data, LADWP's ability to proactively address energization bottlenecks, and implementation timeline and resource requirements.
- v. Recommended modifications to the Rules Governing Water and Electric Service to implement applicable provisions of this Directive and to generally address delays in service.
- vi. Potential financial mechanisms, such as amortization, that would enable projects to move forward unimpeded by large upfront fees related to temporary power or other Water and Power services.

Executed on this 27th day of April, 2026



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