

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE July 30, 2024

TO Honorable Members of the City Council Economic Development Committee: Tennell Atkins (Chair), Omar Narvaez (Vice Chair), Carolyn King Arnold, Chad West, Adam Bazaldua, Paul Ridley, and Kathy Stewart

SUBJECT Q-Team Process Improvements

The City of Dallas has long offered an expedited permitting process known as the Q-Team. The Q-Team service allows applicants to pay a fee for a personalized and expedited plan review. The Q-Team process has generally been well-regarded and efficient; however, changes over the past few years have resulted in decreased customer satisfaction. In response to recurring complaints about the current Q-Team processes, several necessary changes are being implemented as outlined in this memo.

Stakeholders have expressed concerns about the inefficiency caused by having multiple Q-Teams, the restrictive minimum square footage requirements, and the prolonged engineering approval process. Additionally, the mandatory same-day approval and the lack of enforcement on incomplete applications have been flagged as problematic. These complaints highlight the need for a more streamlined, flexible, and efficient system to better serve our stakeholders.

To ensure these changes address the concerns effectively, we consulted with regular customers of the Q-Team, the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC), and the Development Advisory Committee (DAC). The feedback and suggestions received from these consultations have been implemented.

In our continuous effort to streamline and improve our project submission processes, the Planning and Development Department (PDD) is implementing the following changes to the current Q-Team structure and requirements effective immediately. These changes aim to enhance efficiency, reduce bottlenecks, and ensure that our procedures remain effective and practical.

## 1. **Merge the two Q-Teams:**

There are currently two Q-Teams that have different submittal requirements based on square footage and project scope of work. The new process will consolidate Q-Team 2 with the main Q-Team to ensure all projects are submitted through a single team. This will eliminate redundancy and promote a more unified approach to commercial project management.

**2. Remove Minimum Square Footage Requirements:**

The current process requires that projects have a minimum of 10,000 square feet to be eligible to utilize the Q-Team process. The new process will eliminate the minimum square footage requirement to allow any commercial project, regardless of size, to be submitted to the Q-Team. This change will enable a broader range of projects to benefit from the Q-Team review process.

**3. Adjust Engineering Approval Requirements:**

The current process requires that proposers have full engineering approval and an Early Release to submit to the Q-Team. The new process will mandate that only one round of engineering review be completed. This will expedite the submission process without compromising project quality.

**4. Modify Same-Day Approval Requirement:**

The current process disqualifies applicants unless the Q-Team review can accomplish same-day permit approval. The new process will make same-day approval optional for those who qualify for it, allowing for greater flexibility and reducing unnecessary pressure on the approval process.

**5. Enforce Incomplete Application Expiry:**

Currently, incomplete permit applications stay active indefinitely. The new process will utilize the enforcement capabilities outlined in Section 302.1.1.1 of Chapter 52 of the Dallas City Code (Code), expiring incomplete applications by the 45th day after they were filed. This will help maintain an efficient workflow and prevent backlog and stagnant applications.

**6. Void Inactive Applications Without Permits:**

Currently, inactive permit applications stay active indefinitely. The new process will utilize the enforcement capabilities outlined in Section 302.1.2 of Chapter 52 of the Code, voiding inactive applications for which no building permit is issued within 180 days following the date of application. This measure will ensure timely progression of projects and decrease the median number of days to issue a permit as reflected on the Departmental commercial dashboard.

**7. Revise Fee Collection Process:**

Currently all Q-Team fees are collected after the review is complete, which is problematic because fees are not being collected for the reviews that have been performed, and oftentimes are not collected if the applicant cancels the project. The new process will update the fee collection process to require the base plan review fee, intake fee, and the first hour of the Q-Team review time to be paid prior to the meeting. After the meeting, staff will collect the building permit fee and the meeting fee based on the number of hours or the capped fee as per the fee schedule in Section 303.6.1 of Chapter 52 of the Code.

**8. Remove Engineering Q-Team Disqualifiers:**

The current process has many disqualifiers which is problematic because it limits the number of commercial projects that can utilize the service. The new process will eliminate all disqualifiers for the Engineering Q-Team, aligning its process with that of the regular Q-Team to ensure consistency and fairness.

These changes are intended to streamline our processes, improve efficiency, and ensure we continue to provide exceptional service to our stakeholders. The changes are designed to allow more commercial developments to experience this premier service.

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