



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JULY 1, 2025**
FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT **WARDS: ALL**
DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: STREAMLINE RIVERSIDE REFRESH UPDATE

ISSUE:

Receive and file an update on the Streamline Riverside Refresh effort and its Implementation Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Receive and file an update on the Streamline Riverside Refresh effort and its Implementation Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Customer service excellence remains a top priority of the City Council for City staff to best serve our community.

The City's development services teams have been hard at work fostering a culture of customer "centric" services and a philosophy of continuous improvement. A stellar example is the Streamline Riverside initiative, which created a more transparent, reliable, efficient and expedited experience for our customers.

The Streamline Riverside initiative is multi-faceted and consists of various development tools like expedited plan review and inspection services, comprehensive permit software updates and the use of helpful technology, development code changes to fast track reviews and approvals, the inception of the Development Review Committee, the award winning One Stop Shop, and the use of performance metrics that include customer satisfaction, all of which were initially implemented in May of 2017.

Since its onset, the Streamline Riverside Initiative and its One Stop Shop have been recognized with 10 awards, been written about in numerous national publications, and often participate in statewide conferences.

The One Stop Shop has been recognized statewide and beyond as a best practice for development services. This is evident given the many tour requests from various cities, counties, utilities,

universities and the State of California, among others. These best practice tours are requested so other agencies and organizations who wish to model themselves in a similar fashion can understand, study and take away ideas to implement in their own communities.

DISCUSSION:

The Streamline Riverside initiative is a collaboration of various departments that include Community & Economic Development, Fire, Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Community Services, Riverside Public Utilities, Innovation and Technology, Police, General Services and Finance, all who serve and support our development services. Another critical collaboration making the One Stop Shop and Streamline Riverside initiative meaningful is the critical stakeholder input provided by our local design professionals, developers, builders, the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce and our customers.

Like any great customer service model, continuous improvement is the key to success. To ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and data-driven service delivery for development customers to navigate the permitting process with predictability, speed and ease, the Streamline Riverside initiative is currently undergoing a refresh of its overall development services. After hearing from the development community, our customers, and the One Stop Shop team, many new tools, processes and resources have been implemented while other transformative improvements and programs are on the way.

The One Stop Shop team has been busy delivering a series of programs, tools and process improvements that have led to great success in our streamlining efforts. Some of the more notable improvements include:

Public Works Department

Traffic Engineering has shared a Citywide map of average daily traffic counts to help kickstart traffic analyses and allow prospective developers to assess roadway traffic near their property. The Streets Engineering Division launched the Riverside Streets Maintenance map, helping with development and utilities to plan for critical roadway work.

Land Development is currently working to participate in the Community Rating System for flood insurance premium rates which will help to mitigate risk and reduce insurance rates in impacted areas.

The City also launched its VMT Mitigation Bank and TREDLite VMT analysis tool, providing developers with a streamlined, cost-effective way to mitigate Vehicle Miles Traveled impacts while accelerating the buildout of the City's Bicycle Master Plan.

Riverside Public Utilities

Our Public Utilities Department understands the needs of the development community and, in partnership with the One Stop Shop, has developed an expedited process that enables our customers to effectively navigate the electrical and water service design process, saving critical time and money during construction. For example, RPU implemented project management software to facilitate electronic submittal, review, and tracking for material cut sheets and other pre-construction correspondence. In addition, development construction project leads now schedule a preliminary, pre-construction meeting with the developer's team immediately after the water plans are approved to outline the process, responsibilities, and identify any challenges prior to them

setting a formal start date. This reduces and, in some instances, removes uncertainty, so that when the construction start date arrives there is a much better chance of it staying on schedule with no surprises.

In addition to having some of the lowest utility rates in the State, RPU has several critical electrical distribution system upgrades underway, such as the Hunter Substation and the Casa Blanca Substation projects, as well as securing a second connection to the State's electric transmission grid, which is essential to ensure reliable power. On the waterside, the team has just completed a major regional water supply project with its regional partners, which will secure Riverside's water supply through an investment in the Seven Oaks Dam, thereby continuing Riverside's water independence.

RPU also offers rate incentives for both new business attraction and existing business expansion, depending on customer type and electric load. Typically, RPU can provide energy audits to help develop a roadmap for improving efficiency and achieving cost savings, as well as offer rebates to offset energy-intensive processes, such as lighting and refrigeration.

Public Utilities is constantly exploring and implementing practical tools and resources to assist our customers. This proactive approach ensures that we always have the necessary resources available for service delivery, even in the face of the ever-changing and challenging construction market. This includes the proactive procurement of long-lead, critical infrastructure items, such as electrical transformers and water distribution pipes.

Fire Department

The Fire Prevention Division implemented a new system for inspection scheduling, which includes an "Inspection Request Hotline". This resource allows staff to receive scheduling requests, schedule inspections and provide guidance related to the inspection in real time. The new system is more efficient as schedulers have been able to handle all requests promptly, coordinate inspections based on location, provide a wider range of fire inspector availability, and keep an organized record of all development related inspections.

Community & Economic Development Department

With the launch of DWELL Riverside, the Department recently implemented Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Standard Plans that are available to homeowners throughout Riverside. The program is an effective tool that allows our customers the ability to select from various building plan types to construct new detached ADU's, saving time and money with significantly reduced plan check turnaround times, free code compliant construction plans, and even same day permitting, with the soon to be implemented - Over the Counter Day.

Building & Safety recently launched its Safety-First Amnesty Program, allowing homeowners throughout the City to legalize unpermitted residential construction with various tools like the Amnesty Program or the Certificate of Non-Complying/Unpermitted Conditions. This program is a game-changing resource that removes barriers like penalty fees and allows the structure to be legalized in accordance with the code in effect at the time of construction. Further reducing regulatory barriers that allow for safe and creative alternative housing solutions that are needed throughout the community.

The Department also established its first ever Concierge/Streamline Team Pilot Program that assists development projects through the permitting process through to Certificate of Occupancy

with a single point of contact and support from the One Stop Shop team to ensure projects stay on time and have the help they need to open for business as quickly as possible. The successful grand opening of the Farmhouse Collective is a great example that exemplifies the collaborative spirit and effort of this exciting program.

Additional improvements on the way also include a refresh of the Development Review Committee (DRC) process to provide even greater levels of certainty, predictability and expediency, as well as “Over the Counter Day” where One Stop Shop customers can set appointments with staff to obtain plan check for certain project types at the permit counter and expedite the building plan check and permitting approval process, eliminating the typical plan review turnaround times.

One Stop Shop

There are various other enhancements our One Stop Shop team has made over the past year to help improve our customers’ experience and create greater efficiency for the team, supporting the Streamline Riverside initiatives continuous improvement model.

These include software upgrades, improved inspection request processing, educational handouts, and website updates, to name a few. For example, a recent software upgrade in our permit tracking software - POSSE LMS, has helped streamline the e-Plan submittal process, eliminating the need for cumbersome single page uploads that can take quite a bit of time with larger projects, and allowing a single file for the entire plan. This was a huge win that allowed our design professionals to easily resubmit electronic plans in an expeditious manner and get to permit approvals faster than ever before.

Though much has been accomplished, there are many other programs, tools and resources the team continues to advance in the year ahead. As an industry leader, it’s imperative that our development services stay ahead of the curve in all aspects of service delivery to help ensure customer service excellence, which has always been the standard in Riverside.

The following table depicts a roadmap of projects recently completed or underway, as a part of the Streamline Riverside Refresh effort:

IMMEDIATE	SHORT TERM 3-6 Months	MID TERM 6-12 Months	LONG TERM 12+ Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff Training ▪ Expedited Reviews and Inspections ▪ Concierge/Streamline Team Pilot Program ▪ ADU Standard Plans ▪ Safety First Program ▪ Over the Counter Day ▪ DRC Refresh ▪ Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) ▪ Rebranding our Image ▪ Tenant Improvement Innovation Program (TI-IP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Plan Check Self Certification Pilot Program ▪ Permit Software Update: POSSE 7.4 ▪ New Data Reporting Tool ▪ Adaptive Reuse Ordinance ▪ RPU Expediting Services and Resources ▪ Marketing Video ▪ Data Dashboards ▪ Economic Development Programs and Resources ▪ Academy Training ▪ AI Chatbot ▪ Onboarding Training/Toolkit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online Virtual Assistant/ Messenger ▪ Building and Fire Code Triennial Updates ▪ OSS Website/ Data Dashboard ▪ OSS Minor Remodel ▪ Customer Training Videos: OSS lobby and website ▪ AI Plan Check Assistance ▪ Streamlined Zoning Code Updates ▪ ADU Garage Conversion Standard Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permit Software Upgrade: Internal Environment and Virtual Permit Portal ▪ OSS Major Remodel ▪ User Fee Study: Add resources (8 FTE – Public Works, Planning and Building & Safety) ▪ Phone System Enhancements ▪ Queuing System Enhancements ▪ Final Concierge and Ombudsman Programs

A presentation on the latest efforts surrounding the Streamline Riverside Refresh, the One Stop Shop, and the future of our development services will be provided.

The department head of each department that participates in the One Stop Shop and Streamline Riverside Initiative concurs with this report and presentation.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.2 – Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the City.**

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The Streamline Riverside Initiative and its refresh effort is a collaborative process with community partners to ensure development services are provided in a timely and efficient manner to building community trust in the development process.
2. **Equity** – The Streamline Riverside Initiative and its refresh effort provides specialized development services to all permit applicants.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Streamline Riverside Initiative and its refresh effort implements tools and processes that are cost-effective, saving the organization and customers time and money.
4. **Innovation** – The Streamline Riverside Initiative and its refresh effort provides a full range of virtual development services including web-based building permitting and plan check services that serve our community, among other virtual resources.

5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Streamline Riverside Initiative and its refresh effort will allow the One Stop Shop the ability to maintain continuity of operations in times of need and during emergencies providing a full range of virtual development services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund associated with this update.

Prepared by: Chris Christopoulos, Community & Economic Development Deputy Director

Approved by: Jennifer A. Lilley, Community & Economic Development Director

Certified as to availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer

Approved by: Mike Futrell, City Manager

Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachment: Presentation