



Office of the Mayor and City Manager

TO MAYOR/COUNCIL FYI
Date 1/31/18 By M Marchini

January 31, 2018


TO: HONORABLE MAYOR LEE BRAND
COUNCIL PRESIDENT ESMERALDA SORIA
COUNCIL MEMBERS

THROUGH: WILMA QUAN-SCHECTER,  City Manager
City Manager's Office

 JANE SUMPTER, Assistant City Manager
City Managers Office

JENNIFER K. CLARK, AICP, Director
Development and Resource Management

MIKE SANCHEZ, AICP, Assistant Director
Development and Resource Management

FROM: TIM A. ORMAN, Chief of Staff, Mayor 
Chairperson, Business Friendly Fresno 2.0!

SUBJECT: Explanation Regarding Building Permit Timelines

This memo is in response to questions raised from the dais on January 25, 2018, by Councilmember Bredefeld regarding two building permits. It is also presented in the spirit and process of transparency and to acknowledge that the Mayor and Administration are fully aware of the challenges and issues the City of Fresno faces in approving nearly \$1 billion a year in building plans and permits. We believe that finding long-term solutions will be best served by looking at the facts and analyzing the data and not by anecdotes masquerading as either.

17-14514

A scheduled request to speak was received by the Clerk from Robert (Bob) E. Solis. Mr. Solis expressed frustration regarding a permit for work being performed at his residence. The permit application was submitted on 10/25/2017 with a permit issued on the same day. On 10/31/17, a request for a final inspection was performed that concluded some revisions to the plan needed to be made. These revised plans were not submitted until 12/4/17, 35 days later. This revised plan was approved on 12/21/17, eleven days beyond the expected due date as a result of the unavailability of staff during this time. During his Scheduled Communication, Mr. Solis expressed frustration

that building inspectors could not approve or “final” the work by his contractor. The construction was inspected and “finalized” on 1/16/2018.

After his testimony, the City Manager arranged for the Building Official, Brian Leong, to meet with Mr. Solis in the lobby. Mr. Leong provided an explanation of the process along with an apology for any inconvenience.

17-11279

Also on January 25, 2018, two constituents met with Councilmember Bredefeld to discuss processing delays regarding a commercial remodel permit. Concerns stemmed around the communication between city staff and the applicants and their representative. The applicants contend that they were informed by city staff that their plans were ready when in fact corrections needed to be made before permits were to be issued. Upon submittal of any application for plan check an estimated date for the completion of the initial review of a project is provided; this first review timeline is calculated based upon the level of complexity. For a commercial tenant improvement of this type, a fourteen day timeframe is projected to review and comment on the initial submittal.

The following is a history of this plan check:

08/23/17	First submittal. This first plan was rejected by Building and had resubmits from Fire, Mechanical, and Plumbing.
09/21/17	All initial comments in with applicant contacted. Plans picked up by applicant on 10/9/17.
12/05/17	Second submittal with Fire requiring a 2nd resubmittal.
12/20/17	Applicant contacted and picked up plans same day.
01/09/18	3rd submittal (to Fire only).
01/19/18	Fire finished review.
01/22/18	Applicant contacted.
01/24/18	Applicant picked up.

In this case we had a 3 week delay in the applicant picking up the first set of comments. Once received, the applicant waited 2 months to resubmit their revised plans.

It is important to note that delays in reviewing plan documents can be due to the quality of the original submittal. High quality plans which conform to the California Building Code can be reviewed quickly; plans with significant errors take more time to review

and re-review. Standard review timelines provide an estimated due date for initial review and comment only. Applicants are notified within one business day of the completion of plan check. Issuance of building permits occurs after all plan check comments are corrected and/or addressed by the applicant.

The implementation of Accela will allow more transparency in the plan review process. For example, developers will now be able to review their plans during any step of the process and review the comments posted to date; thus, reducing the amount of time it takes for applicants to receive feedback and move their projects forward. Overall, Accela is one of the key strategies of the BFF2.0! initiative that will provide a seamless experience for project applicants working with the City and provide decision-makers at all levels with an unpatrolled amount of highly organized data in order to improve our processes and reach the Mayor's stated goal of making Fresno the most business friendly City in California.