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MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON RELEASES CUT THE TAPE REPORT ON STREAMLINING HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESSES

The Cut the Tape report highlights 100+ concrete actions to accelerate administrative processes to build more housing and support commercial development

CHICAGO — Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson unveiled the Cut the Tape report, the first milestone in the mayor's three-part process improvement initiative, launched on December 11, 2023. The initiative, sparked by the issuance of Mayor Johnson's Executive Order 2023-21, sets immediate and near-term actions the City of Chicago will take to lay the groundwork for tangible improvements in administrative processes to build more housing and support commercial development in the coming months and years.

The Johnson Administration has remained steadfast in its commitment to enhancing efficiency and catalyzing growth across housing and commercial development sectors.

"Our mission is to foster growth and elevate Chicago's economic landscape, as outlined in the Cut the Tape report, which aims for a more effective and streamlined development process," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "This strategy will quickly increase residential and commercial projects, stimulating business sectors and addressing the urgent need for housing. Together, we're breaking down barriers to progress and building towards a more prosperous city for all."

The goal of the initiative is to decrease the redundant and inefficient steps in the development process, reduce the days and weeks lost to review cycles, and increase communication and trust with all our development partners. Collectively, these improvements should lead to more units of affordable, supportive, and market-rate housing; more business and commercial development in every neighborhood; fewer project delays; and increased satisfaction with City processes.

The Administration is committed to taking action across three strategic priorities:



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- **Build Faster** – speed up the pace of development by streamlining approval processes
- **Build Everywhere** – allow more housing and businesses to be developed in more places
- **Build Together** – partner with public, private, & philanthropic stakeholders to create innovative solutions

To kick off the Build Faster strategy, Mayor Johnson’s Executive Order 2023-21 Streamlining City Development Processes gave 14 City departments 90 days to report to the Deputy Mayor of Business and Neighborhood Development on points within the housing and commercial development process that led to increased timelines, costs, and potential uncertainty. The Mayor’s Office engaged more than 100 City Staff, 90 external stakeholders, and talked to six peer cities.

Within 120 days of the mayor’s executive order, the City was required to release a public report on their collective findings. Today’s release of the Cut the Tape Report represents the culmination of that process.

“I am proud of the work of the Mayor’s Office, Business and Neighborhood Development team, and the 14 City departments that listened to feedback from community leaders and development stakeholders to co-create bold, systems-changing solutions that will result in more development in communities all across the city,” said **Kenya Merritt, Deputy Mayor of Business and Neighborhood Development**.

The report identifies more than 100 recommendations for development process improvement including enhancements in internal and external communication, accountability, resource optimization, and the elimination of redundant processes – thus setting a clear roadmap for actionable steps to optimize development procedures and initiate progress.

The Cut the Tape report will highlight the Johnson administration’s “10 Big Bets” or signature recommendations to improve processes. These include:

1. **Cross-department coordination** through the creation of a new Director of Process Improvement role in the Mayor’s Office
2. **Policy improvements** to enable expedited reviews for affordable housing projects
3. **Zoning** changes that include collaborating with City Council to eliminate minimum parking requirements and streamline special use permits, and more
4. **Improve boards and commission processes** by evaluating the feasibility of streamlining the Community Development Commission (CDC) and the Chicago Planning Commission (CPC)



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5. **Streamline design and construction requirements** by revisiting the Department of Housing's (DOH) Architectural and Technical Standards (ATS) manual
6. **Reduce the number of design review meetings** within the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) from three to one, and reassess the role of the Committee on Design
7. **Eliminate Phase 1 and 2 environmental reviews** as a requirement for sale of environmentally cleared City-owned parcels
8. **Expand the finance pilot** for cash advance payment options
9. **Create an online "City wallet"** account to improve options for customer billing, online payments, and debt check
10. **Work to reduce** the administrative burden of the City's Economic Disclosure Statement (EDS), including expanding expiration dates, allowing exemptions for select projects that receive an allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and more

"For far too long we have heard that the City needs to reduce the hurdles that developers and contractors face when trying to develop housing and commercial properties. Today, the Johnson Administration is announcing the start of a new day for the City of Chicago," said **John Roberson, Chief Operating Officer**.

The Cut the Tape Initiative reflects Mayor Johnson's vision for a more accessible, equitable, and prosperous Chicago. By taking a holistic approach to economic development, the City re-emphasizes its commitment to fostering partnership and collaboration with stakeholders, community actors, business, and development advocates.

For more information on the Cut the Tape initiative and to download the full report, visit chicago.gov/CutTheTape

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