



# City of Austin

P.O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767-1088

May 3, 2021

The Honorable Paul Bettencourt  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Local Government

**Re: Opposition to S.B. 1947**

Dear Chairman Bettencourt:

The City of Austin wishes to express concerns to the members of the Committee on Local Government related to S.B. 1947 by Senator Springer, which relates to the time for the issuance of municipal building permits.

By prescribing a firm 45-day timeframe in which to approve or deny a municipal building permit through the strikeout of Section 214.904(b)(3), this bill limits the service options available to our customers, particularly as it relates to our Expedited Building Plan Review service. The City of Austin Development Services Department (DSD) has established optional review processes that offer our customers the flexibility to address application deficiencies or establish an expedited review meeting with a group of cross-disciplinary experts beyond the standard permitting schedule. The 45-day deadline defined in this bill, as drafted, would limit flexibility of customers and staff to schedule an expedited review meeting outside the defined 45-day approval period or to maintain an open permit while application deficiencies are addressed during intake and initial reviews.

Specifically, Expedited Building Plan Review requires concurrent participation from every relevant discipline in building plan review. If a meeting of all required representatives of both the applicant and DSD were not possible within the 45-day window, DSD would become unable to serve those customers according to their preference while ensuring compliance with required Codes is maintained. If required meetings were not possible within the required timeframe, customers would face other hurdles in achieving their project goals. This could result in denial of viable projects, elimination of some informal steps that help reviews go more quickly, or reverting to a traditional review process that is less efficient but could adapt more directly to these requirements.

While these outcomes do not appear to be the intent of this proposed legislation, the City of Austin believes it is important to make the Committee aware of the potential negative impacts to this existing permitting service, which is supported by the Real Estate Council of Austin, the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin, and other permitting service stakeholders.

Thank you for considering these concerns as you determine the future of this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

Beth M. Culver  
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