city of CINCINNATI
Interdepartmental Correspondence Sheet

June 18, 2025

To: Mayor and Members of Council 202501268

From: Sheryl M. Long, City Manager

Subject: **Benchmarking Performance Measures Progress Report**

Reference Document # 202500287

On February 24, 2025 in the Budget and Finance Committee meeting Councilmember Mark Jeffreys referred the following item for report:

> **MOTION**, submitted by Councilmember Jeffreys, **WE MOVE** that the Administration share a plan within 60 days for benchmarking Development Performance Measures vs. other regional peer cities.

This memo is being provided for informational purposes as an update on progress and analysis to date.

Proposed Peer Cities

To provide useful comparative information, the Department has worked through identifying a set of appropriate peer cities. Major central cities, particularly of our age and complexity, are truly our only peers. Most suburban communities do not have the same breadth of code enforcement cases, complexity of rehabilitation of older structures, the management of derelict and vacant buildings, or often the level of regulatory review (zoning requirements, overlay districts, etc.). To establish comparative performance measures, it is most appropriate to measure ourselves by communities of equal size, level of development activity, and age of building stock.

Based upon an analysis of these factors, the Administration recommends the following jurisdictions as comparative peer cities:

- Cleveland
- Hamilton County
- Kansas City
- St. Louis
- Pittsburgh
- Toledo
- Columbus
- Nashville
- Indianapolis

For this review, City will attempt to interview all of these peer cities and gather information on their present performance.

Fees Analysis

Regarding fees, a Fee Study completed in 2016 reviewed:

- Building and Planning Expenditures per Capita
- Building Permit Fee Structure
- Predevelopment Meetings
- Contractor Registration Fees
- Fee Calculation Comparisons
- Use of Technology Surcharges
- Recommendations for Service Enhancements

Regarding the Building Permit Fee Structure, the study looked multiple estimated project cost valuations as either a new construction project, an addition, or an alteration. This analysis looked at fees for these 1-2-3 family projects and another category for all other construction. The Administration has determined to take a similar approach for the present fee study.

Service Delivery Benchmarks

Within Buildings & Inspections Performance Management Agreement, the department currently actively manages the following measures

- Number of Days to Route an Accepted Application
- Number of Days for Initial Plan Review
- Number of Days for Plan Revision Review
- Number of Days for Preparation for Issuance of Permits

We will seek comparison data on these essential elements of the Permit Issuance process.

Additionally, though these are not currently performance measures of the department, we will seek comparisons on the following items:

- Permitting Volumes, (Per Year, potentially Per Quarter)
- Average # of Revisions (OBC and RCO)
- Average # of Days from Submission to Issuance (OBC and RCO)
- % of Days from Submission to Issuance that permits are awaiting the applicant to respond to the city (OBC and RCO)
- % of Projects Seeking Plan Changes after Permit Issuance (Engineering Changes)
- Review of Inspections – Approvals/Partial Approvals/Denials and Methodologies of their usage
- Evaluate Methodology of Review Process – Linear Processing vs. Concurrent Processing: Many jurisdictions such as Hamilton County, never accept a building permit application until all zoning approvals have been granted and Certificates of Compliance have been issued and presentable to the Building Permitting center. This will be factored in the earlier analysis because zoning compliance and building plan review occur concurrently in the City of Cincinnati and delays in zoning approvals have been known to delay issuance of building permits.

The above outlined study is anticipated to be completed and be able to be shared with Council this fall.

cc: Art Dahlberg, Director of Buildings and Inspections