

SWEETWATER AUTHORITY

Engineering and Operations Committee

September 3, 2025



Development Services Update – April 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025

CONCLUSION

This is an information item.

OVERVIEW

Authority staff provided a development services update to the Board at its May 28, 2025 meeting, with the update capped through March 31, 2025. This informational item presents a Development Services update from March 31, 2025, through June 30, 2025, and focuses on the following information:

- An update on continuing improvements to better serve development customers.
- Highlights from development services activities.
- Development Services Workload and Daily Activities.

Continuing Improvements to Development Services Program

To enhance interagency protocols and streamline permitting and construction processes for developer clients, Authority staff has been engaging regularly with the cities of Chula Vista, National City, and County of San Diego staff since 2024. The current ongoing engagement includes participating in Chula Vista Utility Coordination Meetings, County of San Diego Pavement Project Meetings, and as-needed direct communication with agency staff at project-level. These engagements focus on planning for upcoming projects impacting Authority 's services and workload, improving the development review process, and addressing project-specific inquiries. The engagement activities since the last Development Services Update provided to the Board are:

- City of Chula Vista Fire Department and Authority Development Services Process Coordination Meeting on June 10, 2025: Outline Authority's Plan Review Process and address other items requiring coordination across agencies for review and permitting relevant to Authority's services. City of Chula Vista Fire Department has now agreed to go over a checkoff list required by the Authority before issuing a permit. In addition, effort is being placed on defining limits of responsibility for each agency.
- Project Specific Meetings with Customers: In-person or online meetings were conducted per customers' request to discuss outstanding items in processing projects including but not limited to, Integrity Charter School, Yards at the Bay, Moss Street Condominiums, Vida en Tercera Development.
- Work was reprioritized to achieve faster turnaround times for reviews of smaller projects where feasible.
- Continued to offer pre-submittal meetings and field meetings for complex development projects. This resulted in developers having a better understanding of different approaches to delivering water to its development while complying with Authority design standards and Rates and Rules.

Highlights from Development Services Activities

Authority staff continues to strive for excellence in addressing the needs of the development community in our service area. The table below shows the number of new projects submitted and approved for construction from March 31, 2025 through June 30, 2025, with its expected review time as well as the Authority's backlog for review.

Timeframe	New Projects Submitted	Projects Approved for Construction	Timeframe to Complete the Review	Current Projects Submitted by Developer/Owner in Backlog
March 31, 2025 through June 30, 2025	67	48	2 - 8 weeks	30

In addition, the following activities were performed by Authority staff:

- Approximately 148 letters including design review, design requirements, water availability, and fee and deposit letter were processed.
- A total of 85 customer calls were answered, mostly for accessory dwelling units, static pressure at specific parcels, or development services process inquiries.
- A total of 51 Fire Flow Requests (9) / Hydraulic Analysis (42) were completed.

Development Services Workload and Daily Activities

The Development Services staff are engaged in tasks related to Street Improvements, Development Projects, and Capital Improvements. Due to recent state laws that prioritize affordable housing via higher-density redevelopment, the workload for Development Projects has increased by about 30 percent since late 2021, and there continues to be a steady increase each year.

The daily activities of the four Development Services staff members encompass a variety of responsibilities, including development design reviews, responding to customer inquiries through phone calls and walk-ins, performing hydraulic analyses, processing developments, updating GIS, and attending development project meetings, among others.

Below is a list of some critical tasks performed by the Development Services staff, along with the steps involved and average hours taking in processing each:

Processing and Routing Estimate Request (32 completed during this reporting period): The full process of handling and routing an Estimate Request—from field checks and preparing documents to processing payments, routing service applications, and drafting internal memos.

Processing Required Agency Clearance Forms (RACF) (4 completed during this reporting period): The process of handling Required Agency Clearance Forms—from receiving plans and performing plumbing fixture calculations to drafting conditions, routing for review, and forwarding to the developer.

Processing Hydraulic Analysis (42 completed during this reporting period): The full process of completing a Hydraulic Analysis—including payment processing, verifying the test location, drafting a memo and sketch Exhibit for the request, performing the hydraulic analysis, and routing the results.

Ordering Meter Sets, and Backflow Preventer inspection (19 completed during this reporting period): The process of ordering meter sets and coordinating backflow preventer inspections—including receiving the request, notifying Cross-Connection or Customer Service with service documents, and confirming appointments with customer.

Project Closure Process (5 completed during this reporting period): The process of closing a project account—including reviewing project details, coordinating with staff, preparing cost summaries, notifying Accounting, and drafting a letter providing refund or collection of deficits.

Facility Information Request (54 completed during this reporting period).

Construction meter processing (30 completed during this reporting period): The process of handling a construction meter request—including receiving the request, researching location, drafting conditions, approving necessary forms, and coordinating approvals with various stakeholders.

Pressure Investigations (18 completed during this reporting period): The process of conducting pressure investigations—including receiving the investigation request, researching the location and water pressure, and drafting service work orders.

As of June 30, 2025, the following are some additional notes concerning the workload of the Development Services:

- Development Projects Processed by Authority but Constructed Outside Authority Oversight: Over 1,400 development projects that have initiated or completed processing with the Authority but may be under construction or already completed through land use agencies without undergoing full processing by the Authority.
- Development Projects Currently Under Review or On Hold: In the past two years, over 290 projects have either stalled, or the developers have chosen not to proceed or pay the required fees.
- Completed Development Projects Pending Closure: Over 100 completed development projects have not been closed out by staff. It is estimated to take approximately 3 to 4 hours per project closure, including account auditing, coordination with land use agencies, final fee estimation and processing, and the preparation of a closure letter and project record.
- City of Chula Vista-Issued New Address Notifications: The Authority is facing a backlog of over 390 new address notifications issued by the City of Chula Vista. Each notification requires extensive research with potential of a full development review process.

Additionally, the Development Services staff performs the following tasks: processing easements, quitclaims, and remote water services; handling requests from the Division of Drinking Water (DDW); updating GIS; managing Maximo tasks; attending meetings and training sessions; and preparing record drawings.

The following are several strategies to address the current backlog and improve the overall process:

- Optimize and Automate Processes: Simplify internal workflows by removing redundant steps and standardizing routine tasks such as drafting communications, updating GIS, and preparing recurring documents. Where possible, automate these processes using templates, macros, or software tools. Additionally, coordinate with other jurisdictional agencies to align documentation standards and avoid duplicative efforts, eliminating the need for parallel reviews. This targeted, collaborative approach will reduce processing time, minimize staff workload, and accelerate overall project delivery.
- Enhance Staffing and Task Management: Evaluate opportunities to reallocate existing staff or temporarily assign internal team members to assist with initiating routine or preparatory steps in the development review process. This will help reduce the workload on Development Services staff by allowing them to focus on more technical or specialized tasks. Consider increasing staff in high-priority areas where backlogs are significant. In parallel, research and implement project management tools to better track task progress, manage priorities, and improve visibility across teams. Engaging a consultant to help assess current workflows and develop a streamlined process improvement plan could further support long-term efficiency.
- Regular Reviews and Customer Communication: Implement regular process reviews to identify and address bottlenecks quickly. Improve how we communicate with customers by setting clear expectations and gathering feedback to continuously refine service delivery.
- Development Portal: Currently under construction. This portal will support document management to allow developers to, apply for services, receive notifications, correspondence, and check on status of individual development projects.

These strategies focus on making the most impactful changes that can help reduce the backlog while improving efficiency and customer satisfaction.

The following are updates on notable development projects:

- **Sharp Chula Vista**: The project is to construct a three-story 75,000 Square Foot Medical Office Building with 375 space above grade parking. Uses include Outpatient Care as well as Urgent Care. Project approved by the Authority on April 1, 2025, and currently under construction.
- **Moss Street Condominium**: The project consists of constructing eighteen (18), three-story buildings with 141 condominium units on Moss Street, Chula Vista. Project approved by the Authority on March 17, 2025, and currently under construction.

- **Chula Vista Bayfront Redevelopment, H-3 Parcel:** Staff completed final walk through on Monday, April 7, 2025. Authority's Operations worked on valve exercising and the new water facilities to be inputted into Authority's GIS. Project approved by the Authority on October 5, 2022, and construction completed as of April 7, 2025, and currently in closeout.

Feedback Received from Developers

Following direction from the Board in April 2021, staff continues to request and collect post-project surveys from each developer. Since the previous Q3 update to the Board in April 2025, no developer surveys have been received. Sweetwater Authority will re-engage with developers to actively solicit feedback on the development review process. This input will be compiled and reported with clearer context to better inform future improvements and stakeholder alignment. Notably, we've received several unsolicited emails from developers expressing appreciation for recent process enhancements, which reinforces the value of continued dialogue and transparency.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this update.

OPTIONS

This is an information item.

Staff Contact:

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Roberto Yano, Assistant General Manager

Xochitl Aranda, Director of Engineering and Operations

Alejandro (Alex) Garcia, Engineering Manager

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Attachment
Staff Presentation

Strategic Plan

- Strategic Plan Goal No. 2: System and Water Supply Reliability – Achieve an uninterrupted, long-term water supply through investment, maintenance, innovation and developing local water resources.
- Objective SR7: Proactively engage and coordinate with the land use agencies, development community, residents, and businesses on public water infrastructure requirements to ensure proposed public facilities meet Authority standards, and to expedite review process.
 - Task 1: Obtain development information once a month from each land use agency, to determine which development projects require public water infrastructure review of compliance with Authority standards.
 - Task 2: Attend once a month a public event for local outreach, to disseminate information on Authority development requirements.
 - Task 3: Provide quarterly updates to the Board on highlights of development services efforts and process improvements.
 - Task 4: Install and/or upgrade water facilities for developer customers in accordance with approved plans, as needed and based on fees collected from developers.
 - Objective CS3: Explore and implement process improvements to better serve developer customers.

Task 1: As part of quarterly updates to the Board on development services (SR7-3), report to the Board on process improvements made to better serve developer customers.

Past Board Actions

January 22, 2025	The Board received a Development Services update (Information Item).
December 11, 2024	The Board adopted Resolution 24-18 amending the Rates and Rules and the Supplement.
August 26, 2024	The Board received a Development Services update (Information Item).
June 12, 2024	The Board approved the FY 2024-25 Strategic Plan Detailed Work Plan.
March 13, 2024	The Board received a Development Services update (Information Item).
October 11, 2023	The Board received a Development Services Improvements Implementation Plan and Development Services update (Information Item).
April 12, 2023	The Board directed staff to prepare an implementation plan for consideration at a future Board meeting; and present it to the Engineering and Operations Committee meeting for input.
	The Board received a Development Services update from staff (Information Item).