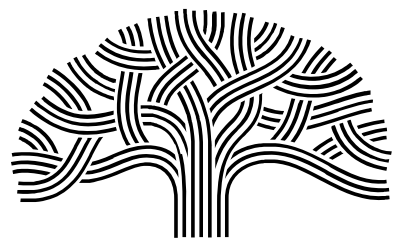


Citywide Permit Reform

#OAKPermits

Fall 2025



CITY OF
OAKLAND

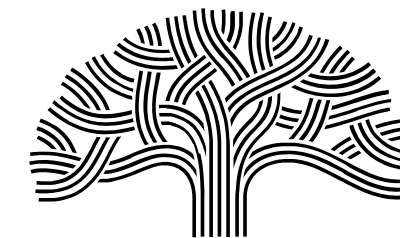


OAK Permits - Contents

A.Mission, Goals, and Governance

B.Four Key Action Areas

C.Action Item updates



**CITY OF
OAKLAND**

City Staff



Robin Abad Ocubillo
Citywide Ombuds



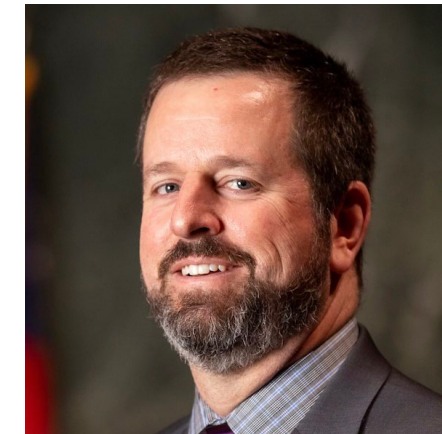
Tony Batalla
Director
Information Technology



William Gilchrist
Director
Planning & Building



Ashleigh Kanat
Director
Economic & Workforce
Development



Josh Rowan
Director
Transportation &
Public Works



Darin White
Fire Marshall
Fire Department



Christy
Johnston-Limon
Dep. Director,
EWDD



Ed Manasse
Dep. Director
Planning



Albert Merid,
Asst. Director
Planning &
Building Dept.



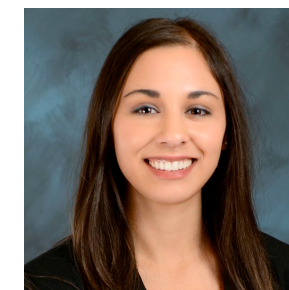
Cecilia Muela
Chief Building
Official



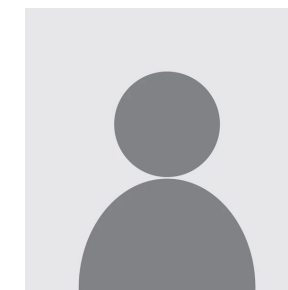
Michelle
NewRingeisen
Asst. Director,
ITD



Jamie Parks
Asst. Director,
Transportation



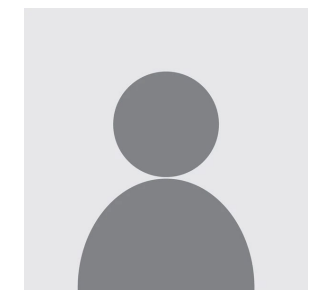
Rose Rubel
Asst. to the City
Administrator



Javan Smith
Asst. Fire
Marshall

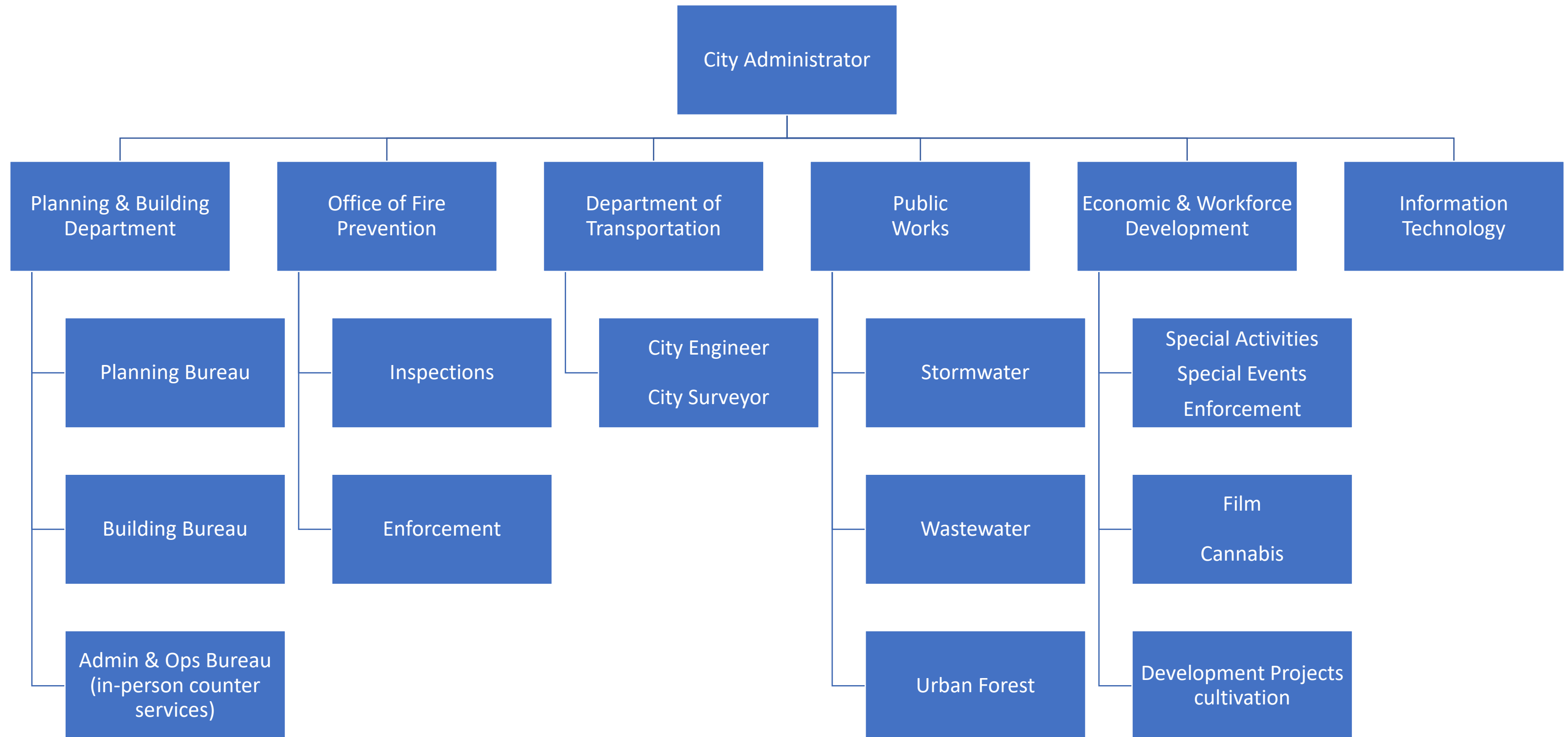


Joesph Tanios
Director OPW



Kat Torio
Dep. Director,
EWDD

OAK Permits Governance



OAK Permits Mission

“Improve the City of Oakland's permitting processes to achieve fair, consistent, equitable outcomes for the public and City staff through enhanced coordination, efficiency, accountability, transparency, and communication.”

Alignment with the City's Equity outcomes:

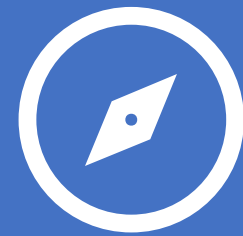
- Policy – of fairness, consistency, and equity
- Practices and Procedures – by striving to make objective, data-driven decisions on service requests and permit review; eliminating inefficiencies; and establishing accountability and transparency around the City's performance



OAK Permits Goals & Objectives

For Customers	For Permitting Departments
Streamlined and modern experience for permittees (Customer Journey)	Real-time internal monitoring of KPIs and performance against statutory requirements (i.e. single database of record; monitoring dashboards)
Highly accessible permitting, with multiple options for conducting business (digital/virtual, in-person)	Less manual labor, more staff time efficiencies (integrated digital processes)
Transparent, real-time project and case management statuses	More efficient communication between disciplines & teams (i.e. single database of record)
Structured channels for providing feedback and partnering on solutions where appropriate	Inter-department Process Mapping to diagnose and correct inefficiencies (service blueprints)

OAK Permits Key Action Areas



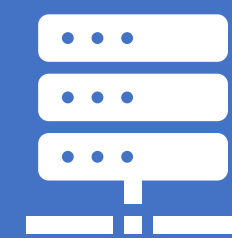
**1. Policy &
Legislation**



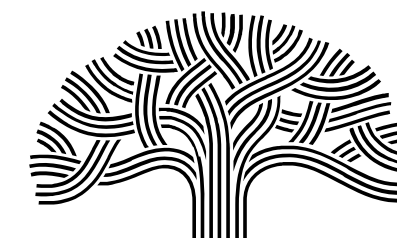
**2. Customer
Education &
Experience**



**3. Expanded Digital
Options**

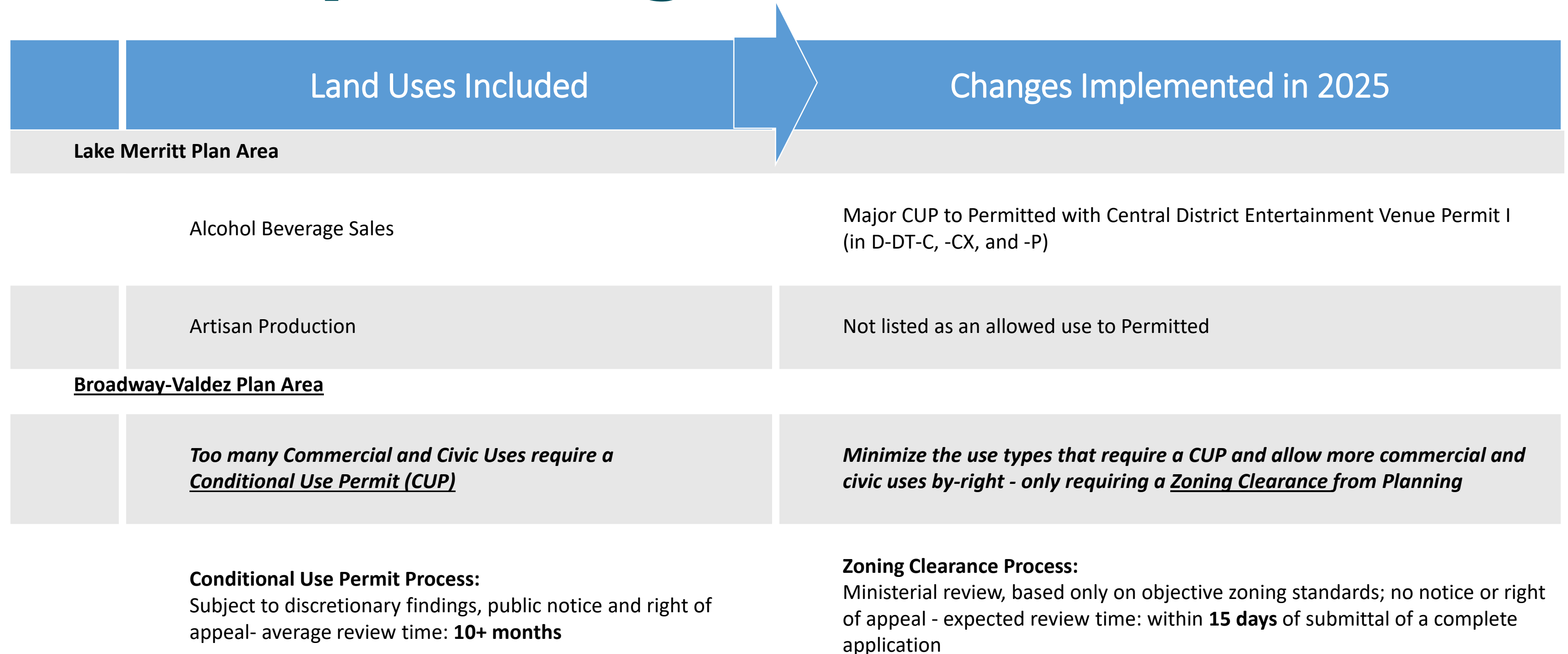


**4. Systems, Data,
& Analytics**



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OAKLAND**

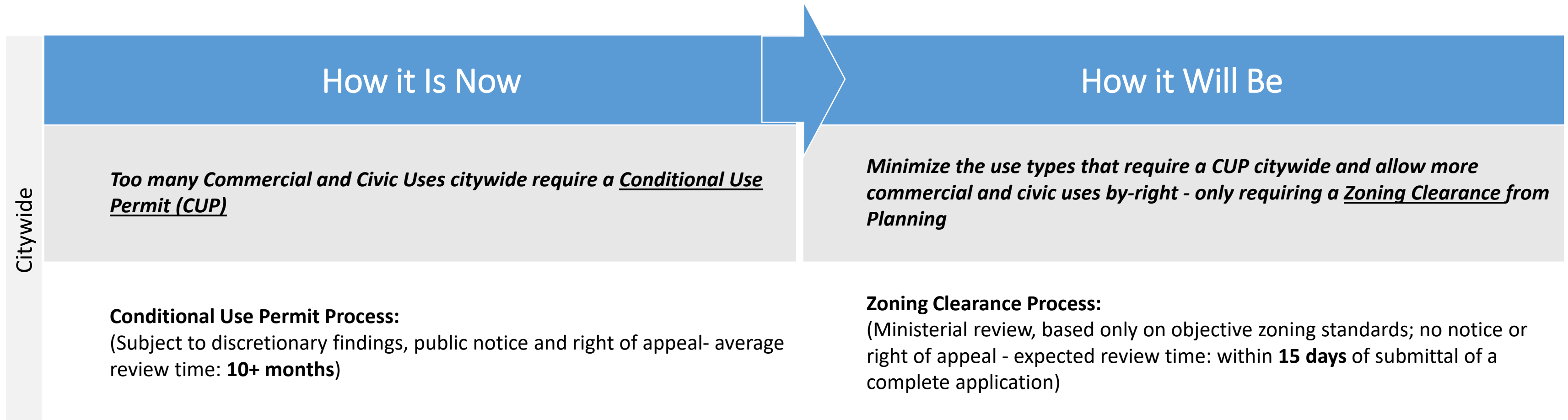
§ 1.1 Expanding Commercial Uses



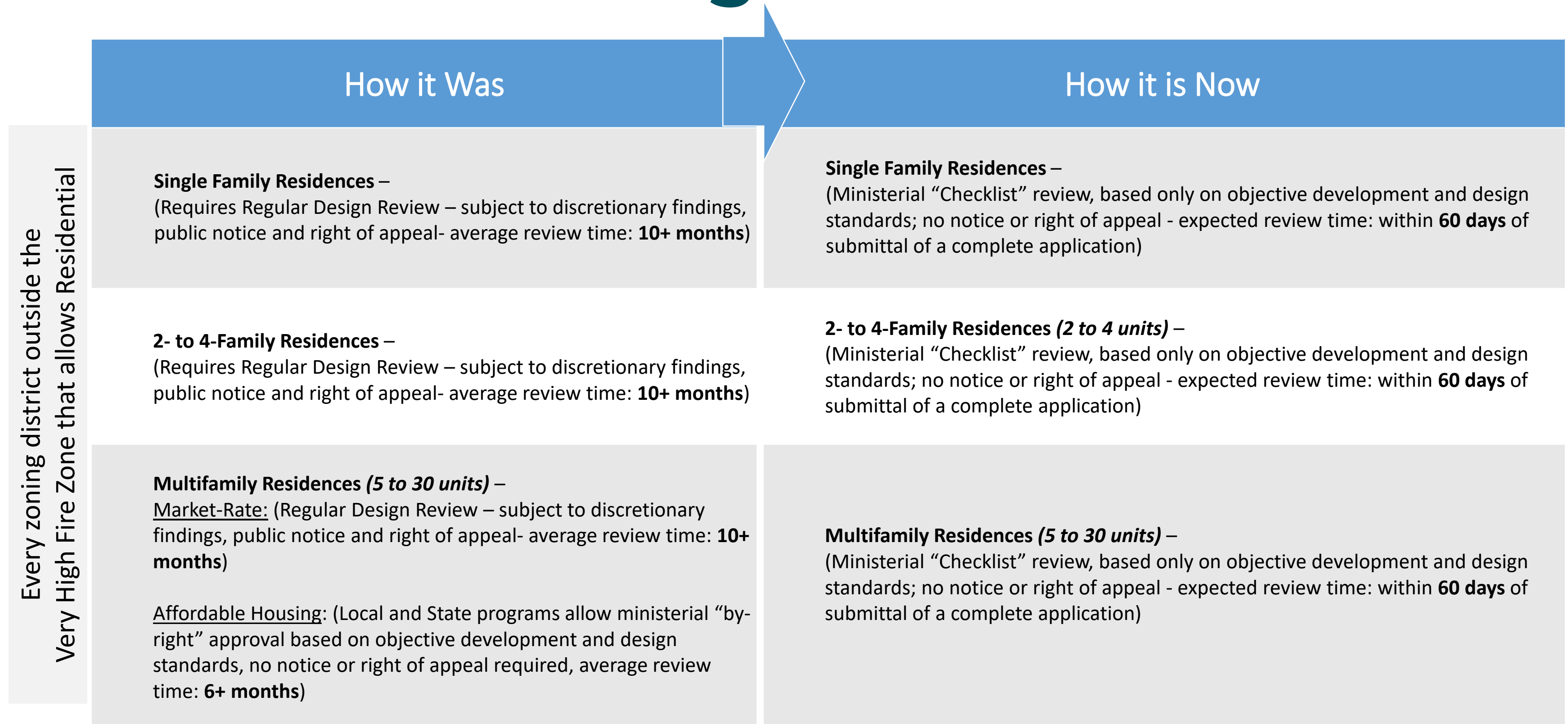
§ 1.1 Expanding Commercial Uses

		Land Uses Included	Changes Implemented in 2025
Lake Merritt		Alcohol Beverage Sales	Major CUP to Permitted with Central District Entertainment Venue Permit I (in D-DT-C, -CX, and -P; and in D-LM-2, -3 and -4))
		Artisan Production	Now listed as an allowed use in the D-LM and D-BV Zones to Permitted
Broadway-Valdez		General Food Sales	Permitted in D-BV-1 Zone as part of new construction (previously prohibited if over 5,000 sf.)
		Alcohol Beverage Sales	Major CUP to Permitted with Central District Entertainment Venue Permit I(in D-BV-1 and -2)
		Mechanical or Electronic Games	Prohibited to Permitted in the D-BV Zones
		Medical Service	Prohibited on ground floor in the D-BV Zones within the first 30 feet to Permitted up to 5,000-sf. without a CUP
		Consumer Service	CUP in D-BV-1 and -2 to Permitted (previously prohibited in D-BV-1 as parft of new construction if over 5,000 sf.)
		Consultative and Financial Service	Prohibited on ground floor In the D-BV-1 Zone within the first 30 feet to Permitted
		Group Assembly	CUP in D-BV Zones to Permitted without a CUP up to 10,000 sf.
		Personal Instruction and Improvement Services	CUP in D-BV Zones on ground floor within the first 30 feet to Permitted
		Business, Communication, and Media Services	CUP in D-BV Zones on ground floor within the first 30 feet to Permitted
		Animal Care	Prohibited in D-BV Zones on ground floor within first 30 feet to Permitted without a CUP up to 5,000 sf.

§ 1.1 Expanding Commercial Uses



§ 1.2 Streamlining Residential Review



1.1 Entertainment Venues

How it Was

- The Entertainment Venue Permit was limited to businesses where the general public is admitted, for a fee, entertainment is provided, and alcohol is served.
- The approval process for serving alcohol required a Major CUP.
- The application was through Open Forms format which limited the ability to autonomously track data and renewals which often led to a lapse in timely and consistent permitting for ongoing uses.

How it is Now

- A new definition for "Central District Entertainment Venue" has been created which is any approved arts, entertainment, and cultural use venue; anticipating the sale of alcoholic beverages (either on-sale and/or off-sale) in conjunction with an approved arts, entertainment, or cultural use and located in zones specified by the Downtown Specific Plan
- These may not require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).
- Approved uses may include entertainment, cultural uses such as bars, cabarets, night clubs, pool halls, bowling alleys, mini-golf, mechanical or electronic games, museums, art galleries, barbershop or salon, nail salon, performing arts centers, auditoriums, theaters, and other similar venues.

1.1 Cannabis Dispensaries & Cafes

How it is now

- Cannabis dispensaries with approved onsite consumption permits are not able to offer musical entertainment or food service within the facility.
- Dispensaries with approved onsite consumption permits are limited to noncombustible methods such as vape or edibles and are not exempt from the City's smoking ordinance.

How it Will Be

- Cannabis dispensaries with approved onsite consumption permits will be allowed to host musical entertainment and food service within their facility.
- Cannabis dispensaries with approved onsite consumption permits who have incorporated modification requirements to support ventilation and odor control, all which have been approved through Planning and Building and Fire Departments, will be allowed to offer space for onsite combustion in addition to vape and edible consumption.

2.1 Neighborhood Business Asst.

- One-on-One technical assistance
 - Intake
 - Assessment
 - Assistance
 - Referral
- Entrepreneurs: Pre-startup up, startup phase
- Existing businesses: navigation, growth
- Common questions:
 - How to start a business
 - Navigating business license, permits
 - Capital access
 - Training



Marissa Gittens, Café Noir Photo credit: Tovin Lapan

📍 2.2 Physical Permit Center @250 Frank Ogawa Plaza

As of Nov 2025, Planning & Building is open every day of the week.

Walk in Hours

Mon – Fri 8:30am – 12pm

Scheduled Appointments

Mon – Fri 12:00 – 4:00

All Planning & Building permit applications are accepted online 24/7

OFD, DOT, and OPW Monday-Thursday

Special Activity Permits (EWD) in City Hall, Rm 123:
Walk-In: Mon, Wed, and Fri, 9am-12pm, 1pm-3pm

Rent Adjustment Program (HCD) in Bldg 250, Lobby:
Walk-In: Tues and Thurs, 10am – 12pm, 1 pm-3pm

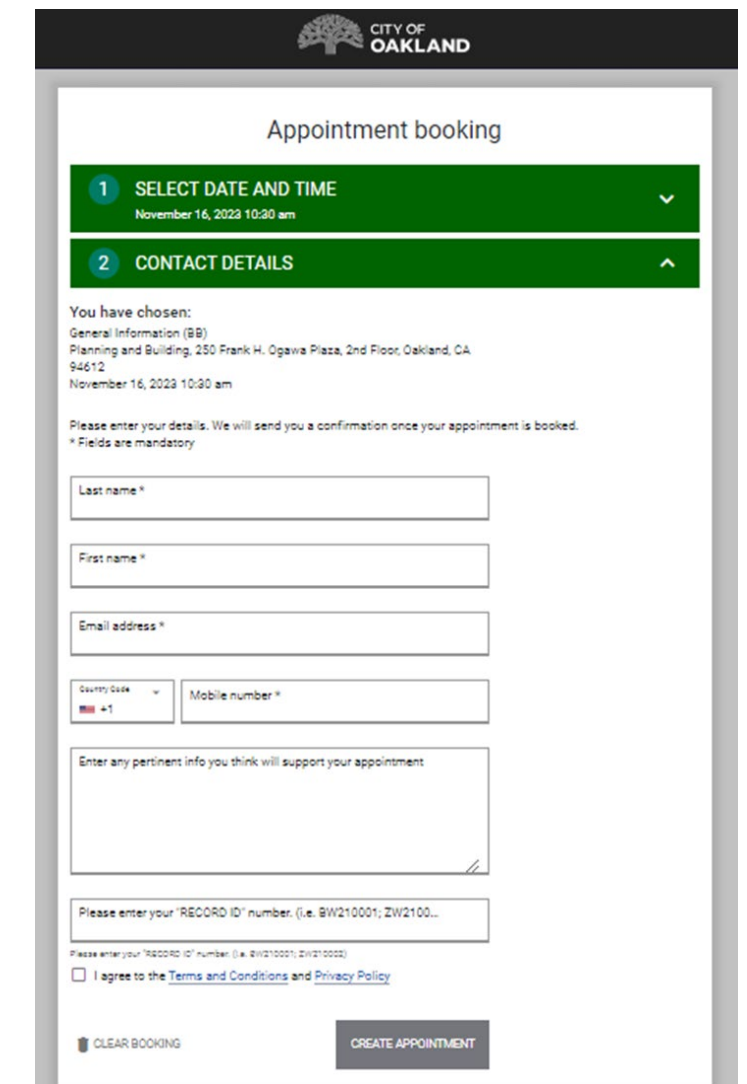
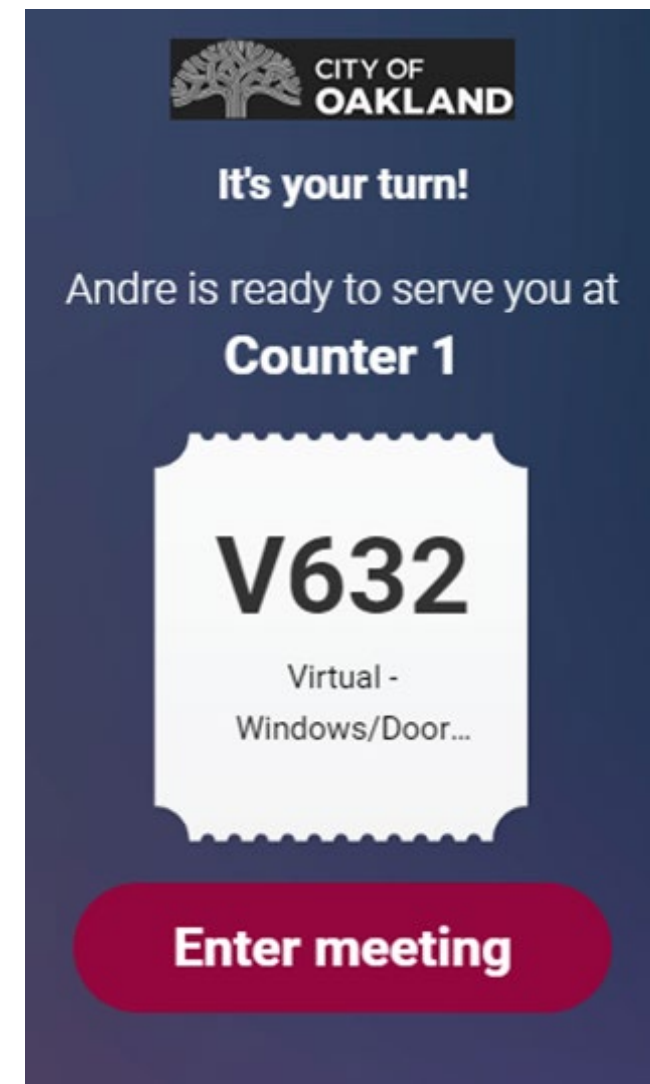


Up Next: Relocation of EWD in-person services to Bldg. 250

2.4 Appointment Scheduling

Appointment scheduling and in-person customer queuing

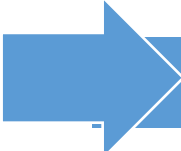
- All departments on one system
- Guides user to the appointment type they need
- Same process for booking appointments: in-person and/or virtual
- Clearer in-person queuing guidance and wayfinding
- Includes Planning, Building, and Records; Fire Prevention, and Transportation

A web-based appointment booking form for the City of Oakland. The form is titled "Appointment booking" and has two main steps: "1 SELECT DATE AND TIME" and "2 CONTACT DETAILS". Under step 1, the selected date and time are "November 16, 2023 10:30 am". Under step 2, the user has chosen "General Information (BB)" and "Planning and Building, 250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 2nd Floor, Oakland, CA 94612". The form includes fields for "Last name", "First name", "Email address", "Country Code" (set to +1), and "Mobile number". There is a checkbox for "I agree to the Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy". At the bottom, there are buttons for "CLEAR BOOKING" and "CREATE APPOINTMENT".

Up Next: Integration EWDD and HCD

2.5 Public Education



 *City of Oakland youtube playlist: “Re-Imagining Citywide Permitting*

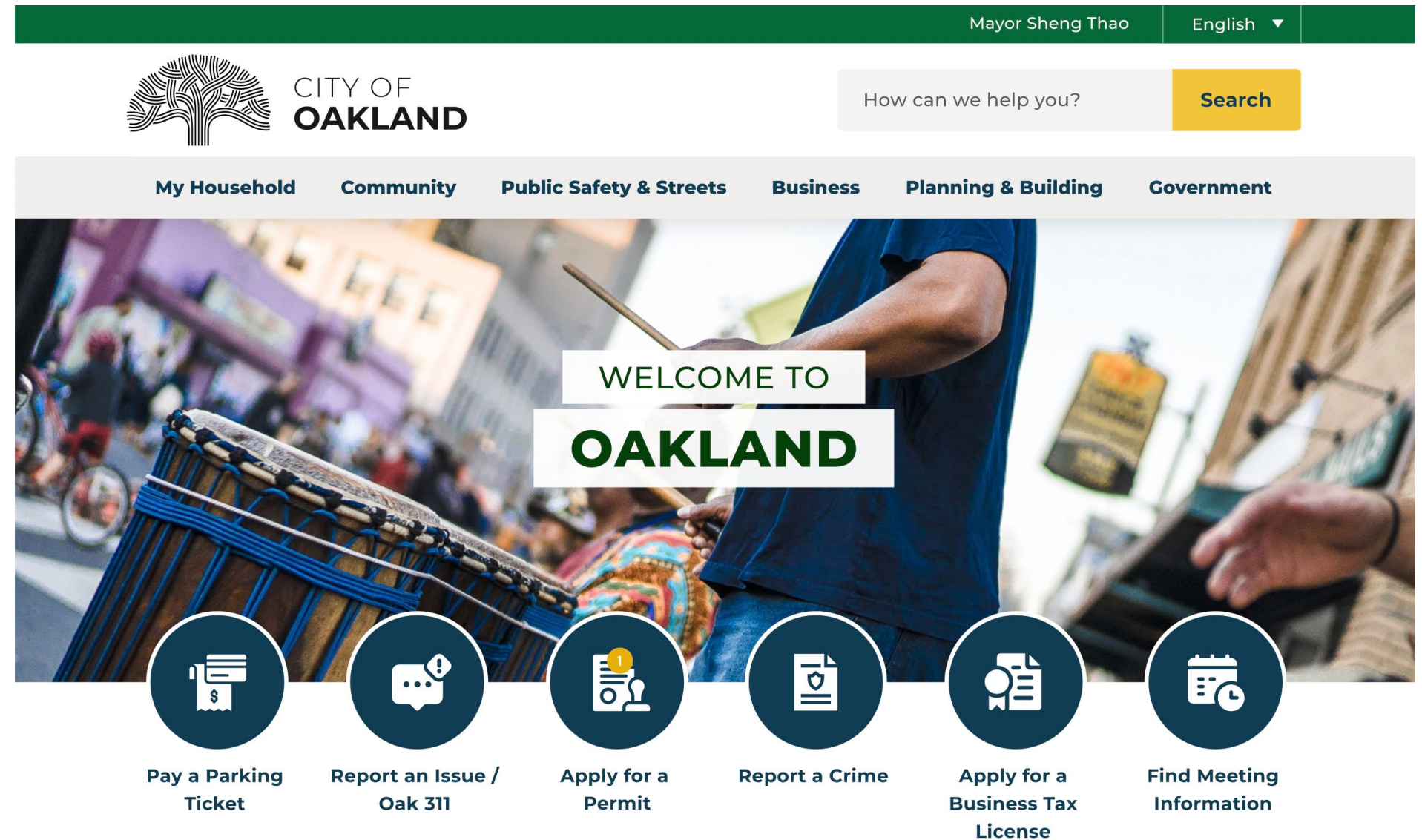
2.6 Website Upgrades

2025

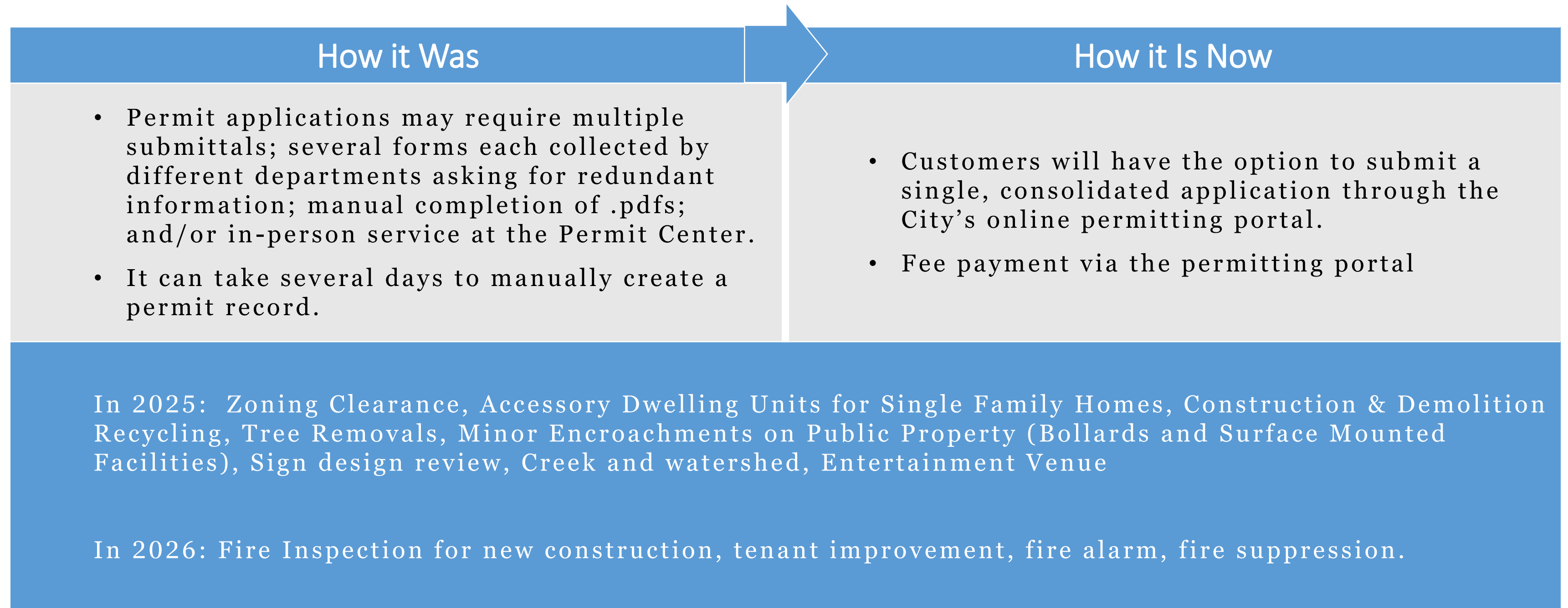
- Improved website search, so customers more easily find essential government services
- Reorganized and streamlined content
- Better use of Oakland's vibrant color palette
- Better security and reliability
- A continuously improving content management system (CMS)

2026

- Redesigned OAK PERMITS landing page
- Simplified navigation
- Project Scoping Tool
- Updated Permit Intake Portal interface



3.1 One-Stop Digital Submittal



3.4 Digital Special Event Permit

How it Was

- Paper application for EWD
- Paper application to Fire Prevention
- Fee Payment in person
- 30, 45 or 90 days for City Review and Approval
- FY 24: 285 Permits Processed, \$90,893 in revenues

How it is Now

- Single Digital Application, routed to both EWD and Fire Prevention
- Fee payment online
- 15, 30 or 60 days for City Review and Approval dependent on Event Tiers
- FY 25: 317 Permits Processed so far, \$93,546 in revenues

As of November 2025

3.8 Same-Day Digital Bldg. Permits

How it Was 3 – 7 Days

-  Customer submits complete permit application or BW worksheet
-  Permit Tech clicks 15+ times to create and progress permit
-  Permit Tech sends notice to customer to submit payment
-  Customer submits payment via Cashier
-  Permit available for printing

How it is Now* Same Day (Average 18 minutes)

-  Customer submits complete permit application, then progresses to payment page to
 -  Complete payment online
 -  Permit available immediately for printing
 -  Onsite inspections (if required) can be Scheduled immediately via Inspection Request Mobile App
- Same day digital permits do not require permit techs, thereby allowing them to focus on more complex projects and maintain preliminary AB2234 timelines for review.

3.8 Same-Day Digital Bldg. Permits

Year	Total Bldg. Permits Submitted	'Trade' Permits* Submitted	Same-Day Digital Permits Issued	Permit Issuance
FY 22-23	15,980	11,435 (72% of 15,980)	0 (0% of 11,435)	3-7 Days
FY 23-24	13,700	7,768 (57% of 13,700)	6,836 (88% of 7,768)	18 Minutes
FY24-25	13,694	9,015 (65% of 13,694)	8,136 (90% of 9,015)	18 Minutes

**Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Lead Paint, Solar, Re-Roofing, Insulation, and Bollards on Private Property permits that do not require plan-check*

3.7 Same-Day Digital Permits

How it is Was

- Permit applications may require multiple submittals; several forms each collected by different departments asking for redundant information; manual completion of .pdfs; and/or in-person service at the Permit Center.
- It can take several days to several weeks to manually create a application record, review, approve and issue the permit.

How it is Now

- Customers will have the option to submit a single, consolidated application through the City's online permitting portal.
- Fee is collected immediately upon application submittal.
- Permit is immediately available for printing.

2025: Bollards on Private Property, Entertainment Venues, Minor Encroachment (Planter Boxes)

2026: Building alterations that are non-structural (and therefore do not require plan check): Kitchen and/or Bath, tenant improvement, foundation, window replacement, stucco and/or siding.

3.10 Same-Day Digital Permits

As of October 2025

- Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing “Trade Permits” that do not require plan-check
- Lead Paint
- Solar
- Re-Roofing and Roof Insulation
- Insulation
- Bollards on Private Property
- Entertainment Venues
- Minor Encroachment (Planter Boxes)

Coming in 2026

- Building alteration permits that are non-structural (and therefore do not require plan check), such as
- Kitchen and/or Bath
- Tenant improvement
- Foundation
- Window replacement
- Siding and/or Stucco

3.12 Digital Project Scoping Tool

How it is Now

- Multiple staff Phone Calls, Meetings
- Searching through multiple city codes
- Sources of information on the website, and referring to outside professionals
- Applications submitted to the wrong permit type, with the wrong forms and information materials

How it will be

An easy-to use tool for applicants that provides project-specific information and guidance. By answering a series of simple questions, it will tell you:

- If a project is allowed at the proposed site(s) per existing zoning
- What land use entitlements and permits would be required
- Required permit application submittals
- Instructions on how to apply
- Total initial estimate of fees
- Option to initiate application process

Target launch 2026

3.13 Eliminate Zoning Worksheet

How it is Now

- All planning applications and revisions are made via ZW which is not a formal permit
- Duplicative work due to the need to create a separate formal permit and review previously submitted documents/information once the formal permit is created.
- ZWs take an average of 35 days for staff action
- Multiple requests for information due to the lack of a single comprehensive list of missing information. “Email loop”

How it will be

- Applicants will apply for their specific permit, and revisions to issued permits will also be available online from the issued (parent) record.
- Single staff point of contact through the permit life cycle
- Elimination of duplicative work.
- 10 days for initial review to ensure compliance with Permit Streamlining Act.
- Provide the applicant with a comprehensive incomplete application document. The goal is to have no additional items after the applicant's resubmittal. Eliminate the “email loop.”

Target launch 2026

3.11 Eliminate Building Worksheet

How it Was

- All building applications and revisions were made via BW which was not a formal permit, but an intake form.
- Duplicative work due to the need to create a separate formal permit and review previously submitted documents/information once the formal permit is created.
- BWs took an average of 17 days for staff action
- Multiple requests for information due to the lack of a single comprehensive list of missing information: “Email loop”

How it is Now

- Applicants apply directly for a specific permit. Revision submittals can also be submitted online from the issued (parent) record.
- Single staff point of contact through the permit life cycle
- Eliminates duplicative work.
- 15 days for initial review (regardless if the project is subject to AB2234).
- Provide a comprehensive, single application document to the applicant, capturing all required items at the outset. Eliminate the “email loop.”

Target Launch 2026



4.1 Single Database of Record

Department	Current Database	Status
Planning & Building	Accela	Ongoing enhancements
Fire Prevention	Accela	Ongoing enhanmcements
Transportation	Accela (PBD Module)	Dedicated Module In Process <i>Target Launch CY26</i>
Public Works	Accela (PBD Module)	Dedicated Module In Process <i>Target Launch CY26</i>
Economic & Workforce	Legacy Systems + Accela	Full Integration in Process <i>Target Launch Q1 CY26</i>

4.3 Electronic Plan Review

How it is Now

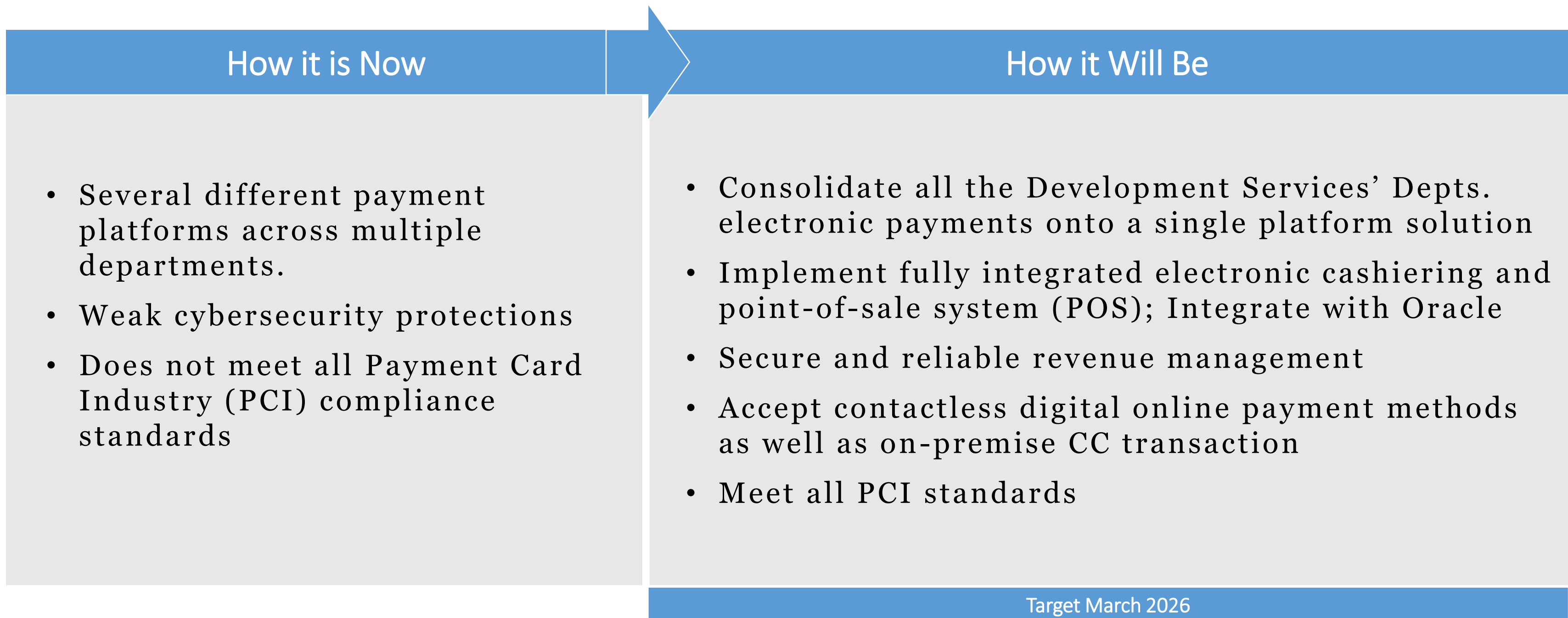
- Documents received & processes managed *outside* the Citywide permit database.
- Each department transmits comments to sponsor separately.
- Limited visibility and coordination of comments between disciplines
- Manual transmissions makes it difficult to track and report consistently

How it Will Be

- Software reduces review times and improves interdepartmental coordination, tracking, and communication
- Customer uploads plans digitally with application packet
- Fully integrates with permit database (Accela) record, and workflow
- Departments can review/comment concurrently using the EPR
- Approve/stamp electronically

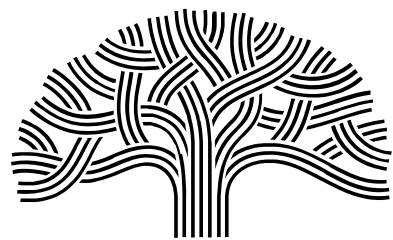
2026 In Queue for Scoping

4.4 Citywide Point of Sale Platform



END

*Additional Reference Materials
included after this slide*



**CITY OF
OAKLAND**



The Citywide Permit Ombuds

The OAK Permits was initiated in late 2020 (then called the “ROSP”) and the Ombuds was hired in June 2023.

The Ombuds is based within the City Administrator’s Office, working across all permit-issuing departments. The Ombuds is not a permit case manager, but manages systems diagnosis of problems, develops recommendations for improvement, and oversees implementation of improvements.



1.3 Development Services

“DEVELOPMENT SERVICES” DEFINITION

Activities associated with the short and long-term strategic development and planning, development transactions, land use entitlement permitting, mapping, construction and building inspection, certification of occupancy, abatement, and/or code enforcement efforts for:

Housing projects, commercial development projects, Special Activities;

Industrial projects; Associated public utilities and infrastructure

Development Services also include legal advice, community outreach efforts, and the creation of public policies, legislation, and regulations.

Development Services, including peer reviewing, may be performed by City staff or outside consultants.

Administrative Instruction No 19 – Master Fee Schedule

“Departments shall undertake a comprehensive Development Services Fee analysis every five (5) years”

📍 2.2 Permit Center Services @ 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Planning	0830-1200* 1200-0400**	0830-1200* 1200-0400**	0830-1200* 1200-400**	0830-1200* 1200-0400**	
Building	0830-1200* 1200-0400**	0830-1200* 1200-0400**	0830-1200* 1200-400**	0830-1200* 1200-0400**	
Fire Prevention	1000-1200* 0100-0200*	0900-1200** 0100-0400**	1000-1200* 0100-0200*	0900-1200** 0100-0400**	
Transportation	0900-0300* 0900-1200** 0100-0400**	0900-0300* 0900-1200** 0100-0400**	0900-0300* 0900-1200** 0100-0400**	0900-0300* 0900-1200** 0100-0400**	
Cashier	0830-0400*	0830-0400*	0830-0400*	0830-0400*	0830-0400
Rental Asst.		1000-1200*, ** 0100-0300*, **		1000-1200*, ** 0100-0300*, **	
Business License	0800-0400*	0800-0400*	0930-0400*	0800-0400*	0800-0400*
* In Person, Walk-In, No Appointment Needed ** In Person, with Appointment					



Up Next: Relocation of EWD in-person services to Bldg. 250

📍 2.2 Permit Center Services @Virtual Meetings

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Planning					0830-0400*
Building					0830-0400*
Fire Prevention			0100-0400*		
Transportation		0900-0400*		0900-0400*	
Cashier					
Rental Asst.	0930-0430*	0930-0430*	0930-0430*	0930-0430*	0930-0430*
Business License	0800-0400**	0800-0400**	0930-0400**	0800-0400**	0800-0400**
	*Virtual, with Appointment		**Online via Chat		



2.4 Bldg. Inspection Scheduling

How it Was

- Manual emails or voicemails the only options for scheduling Building Permit Inspection
- No standard method for updating the client about precise timing of inspector's arrival onsite
- Delays receiving documentation of issues onsite
- In-person physical site visits only

How it is Now

A digital Application now accounts for 45% of all inspections scheduled*

- Schedule inspections during phone outages and staff shortages
- View inspectors' onsite ETA, in real time
- View inspection results live on the app
- Conduct a video inspection remotely if needed

*- As of Q3 24-25, continued growth since go live.

✓ 3.2 Digital Zoning Clearance App.

How it was

- *Applicants commonly file incorrect application types due to the term "Zoning Clearance" not clearly defined on the Web Portal*
- *Applications typically have incomplete information leading to back and forth communication between the applicant and staff contributing to delayed reviews.*

How it is Now

- *The application will state the purpose of a Zoning Clearance to reduce incorrect submittal types.*
- *Additional questions to the application will inform customers when a proposed activity requires a Special Activity permit or requires more review (i.e. triggers a Conditional Use Permit)*
- *Additional questions also inform applicants when and what type of documents are required to process their submittals which will expedite the review process.*

As of July 2025

3.3 Digital A.D.U. Permit

How it is Was	How it is Now
• 12-page form paper form • Complex and convoluted for applicants	• Streamlined digital intake • Step-by-step online guidance • (Fee calculation / invoicing TBC by PBD)
Phase 1 – Single Family Homes	Phase 2 – Multi-Family Homes
Completed October 2025	<i>scoping required</i>

3.5 Digital Film Permit

How it Was

- Manual Application Processing by DOT, Fire, Parks, and OPD.
- Applicants visit each department's counter, navigate different processes, and submit various documents at each stage.
- Delays of days or even months
- Manual fee collection

How it is Now

- A single digital application directly through Accela.
- Simultaneous internal reviews, with EWD staff overseeing the entire process.
- Automated workflows and inter-departmental communications significantly reduce the applicant's burden, improve transparency, and shorten approval times.
- Fees are automatically calculated and collected via Accela's POS integration.
- Dashboard Reports: OFD to automate their application and review process, expediting inspections. DOT to issue parking permits, allowing applicants to print their permits without visiting the city.

As of April 2024

3.6 Digital Cannabis Permit

How it Is Now

- Applications were handled manually, with each department—Planning, Fire, and Building—conducting complex and time-consuming reviews.
- Applicants had to visit multiple department counters, follow different processes, and submit various documents at each stage, which could take days or even months to complete.
- Difficult to track process metrics and outcomes.
- Recordkeeping in a standalone system

How it Will Be

- All data integrated into citywide database. Applicants digitally apply & submit required documents directly.
- Internal communications and simultaneous reviews are managed within the system, with staff in EW overseeing the entire process.
- Automated workflows and communications between departments significantly reduce the applicant's burden, increase transparency, and shorten approval times.
- Fees are now automatically calculated and collected via Accela's POS integration, replacing the previous manual fee collection process.
- Increased compliance and also revenues

3.7 Digital Plan Submittal to Fire Dept.

How it Is Now

- Plan submittal is handled manually conducting complex and time-consuming reviews.
- Applicants submit separate documents to OFD.
- Process tracking is handled through email.
- Recordkeeping in Accela is not integrated with Planning & Building database.
- Fees automatically calculated and collected via Accela's POS integration, replacing the previous manual fee collection process.

How it Will Be

- Applicants digitally apply & submit required documents directly, automating instant record creation in the city's database.
- Automated workflows and communications between departments significantly reduce the applicant's burden, increase transparency, and shorten approval times.
- Increased compliance and also revenues

In queue for Scoping 2026

3.9 Digital Solar Permit

How it Was	How it is Now
• Average of 16 days from application to permit issuance • Manual review of solar plans by staff • Permit Tech manually progresses permit • Solar permits experience most consistent growth in applicants year over year, pre NEM-3.	• Same-Day permit issuance • No manual review of solar plans by staff (Overtime savings) • 51% of all Solar permits applications submitted during FY 24-25 (and growing)

SolarApp+ integration was made possible by a California Energy Commission \$100,000 grant applied for by Planning and Building Department

🔍 4.2 Enforcement Inspector Mobile App

How it Was

- Inspectors spend **60%** of their time conducting field visits, then
- spend an average of **40%** back at the office manually typing notes and notices of violations
- Turn around time for notice of violation creation averaged **5** business days
- Turnaround time for mailing of notices averaged **8** business days

How it is Now

- Inspectors conduct **79%** of their time conducting field visits, entering their notes directly into a cloud-connected tablet
- Turn around time for notice of violation creation is **1** days.
- Turn around time for mailing is **5.8** days
- Code issues are noticed and abated sooner