CITY OF DANA POINT

AGENDA REPORT

Reviewed By:	
DH	X
CM	X
CA	

DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2025

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARTHA OCHOA, MANAGEMENT ANALYST
JESS MCCLOSKY, BUILDING OFFICIAL
KURTH NELSON, PLANNING MANAGER
JEFF ROSALER, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council receive and file the report.

BACKGROUND:

This report provides a summary of development activity in Dana Point from June to October 2025. It includes historical data to identify trends and highlights the development community's needs concerning planning reviews, building permit issuance, and inspections. Moreover, it includes status updates on major projects currently underway in the city.

DISCUSSION:

Public Counter Activity

Figure 1 compares the average daily visitors to the Building Counter over the past four years in Dana Point. In 2024, after the introduction of online plan submission capabilities, the daily average dropped to 20 visitors. Interestingly, this number has remained consistently stable, even with the adoption of new technology.



Figure 1. Average Daily Counter Visits, By Month.

Table 1 presents the average wait times that customers experience at the counter for each division. Based on performance benchmarks from other cities, wait times should not exceed 10 minutes. Over the past two years, all divisions have successfully met this goal. However, with the implementation of new technology and the majority of interactions now occurring online, this metric appears to be increasingly irrelevant. Unless directed otherwise by the Council, this measure will not be included in future reports.

TABLE 1
AVERAGE WAIT TIME

	June			July			August		
	2023	**2024**	**2025**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Planning	5 min	3 min	2 min	5 min	4 min	2 min	4 min	3 min	2 min
Engineering	10 min	7 min	5 min	8 min	6 min	4 min	8 min	6 min	4 min
Building	10 min	6 min	3 min	7 min	8 min	2 min	7 min	7 min	2 min

TABLE 1 (CONT)
AVERAGE WAIT TIME

	September			October		
	2023	**2024**	**2025**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Planning	4 min	3 min	2 min	4 min	4 min	2 min
Engineering	9 min	7 min	5 min	10 min	8 min	3 min
Building	8 min	6 min	2 min	7 min	5 min	2 min

Counter Survey

City Staff distributes a survey to collect feedback on guests' experiences after visiting the permit counter. These optional and anonymous surveys feature multiple-choice questions, yes/no questions, and open-ended responses. The responses collected from June to October 2025 are included in Supporting Document B.

Additionally, Staff has collaborated with FM3 to develop a new survey for developers, homeowners, and contractors to complete during and after the entitlements and building process. This new survey will be implemented in the next quarter, and the results will be displayed in an upcoming Development Update.

Online Plan Review

In June 2025, the city transitioned to accepting plan check submissions exclusively online through the eTRAKIT plan review and permit application portal. This shift to online applications has fundamentally changed staff demands, moving from managing in-person customers to increased electronic communication with applicants through the electronic permitting system.

Table 2. Plan Check Submittals. As of June 2025 all initial submittals occur electronically, in house plan checks by Building are currently done by contract staff when they are at City Hall. This is subject to change and “over the counter” will reflect those plan checks done in house moving forward.

TABLE 2 PLAN CHECK SUBMITTALS					
	June 2025	**July 2025**	**August 2025**	**September 2025**	**October 2025**
Over the Counter	32	41	37	31	46
Electronic	114	130	125	104	169
TOTAL	146	171	162	135	215
Over the counter plan check reviews are limited to projects that are not complex and are small in scope-of-work that can be reviewed within approximately 15 minutes. Such projects include patio covers, re-roofs, and minor field revisions.					

Building Permits

The issuance of building permits serves as a direct indicator of construction activity, as construction typically begins shortly after a permit is granted. Table 3 illustrates construction valuations to highlight the scale of development and investment within the community. Years with higher valuations are often associated with the construction of new single-family homes in The Strand or Monarch Bay. The Strand community is nearing completion, with only three vacant parcels remaining, while Monarch Bay has experienced increased redevelopment in recent years as homeowners shift from leasing to owning their lots.

The permit and plan check fees collected by the city cover the costs of providing vital services, including inspections.

TABLE 3 BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY									
	June			July			August		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Valuation ($Million)	$11.1	$6.6	$5.7	$4.7	$5.5	$4.7	$7.4	$5.1	$416,960
Permit Fees ($)	$159,567	$89,004	$103,397	$61,636	$106,484	$140,752	$145,405	$86,393	$80,898
Plan Check Fees ($)	$107,705	$46,128	$64,057	$34,280	$49,285	$92,610	$96,387	$53,746	$63,336

TABLE 3 (CONT) BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY						
	September			October		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Valuation ($Million)	$6.5	$12	$3	$5	$14	$2.5
Permit Fees ($)	$84,205	$150,743	$111,192	$88,561	$165,809	$81,157
Plan Check Fees ($)	$74,252	$53,747	$33,933	$54,971	$67,207	$72,472

Figure 2 provides the number of Building permits issued per month. Permits consistently hover around 150 permits issued per month, with occasional outliers. June of 2025 saw a decrease in permits issued, most likely due to the implementationof the new fully electronic system.

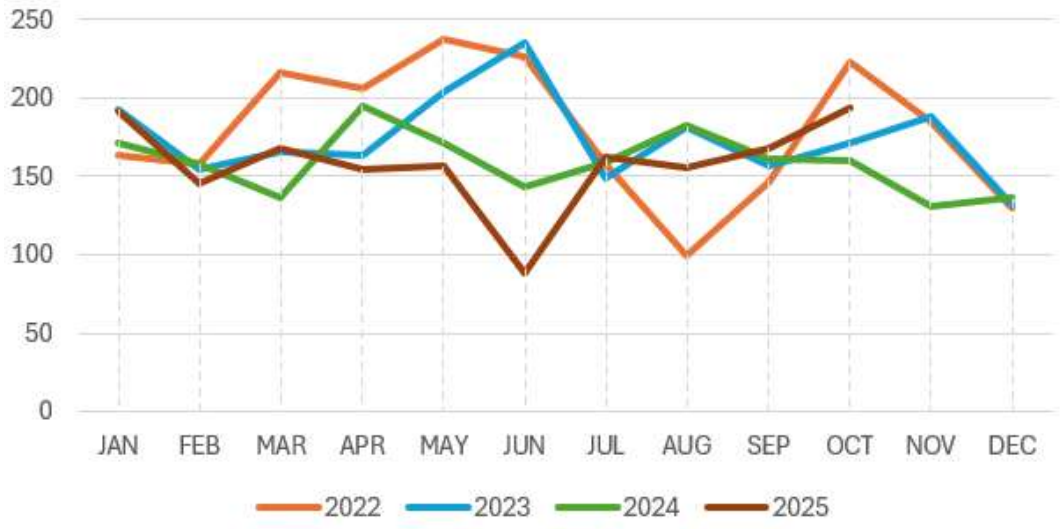


Figure 2. Number of Permits Issued, By Month.

Building

Inspections

Inspections are scheduled within 24 hours of a request, and recently, 2-hour inspection windows have been implemented. The City's three building inspectors are dedicated to assisting both experienced contractors and homeowners. While the number of inspections has remained consistent, averaging 49 inspections per day, the workload, measured in time and the number of inspections required for each site, can vary based on the specific requirements of each construction project.



Figure 3. Average Daily Inspections

Current Planning Activity

A total of 45 new planning applications were submitted from June through October, which aligns with the average. There were thirty-three discretionary applications, including Site Development Permits, Coastal Development Permits, and Administrative Modifications of Standards during this period.

Project Highlights:

Harbor Hotels - The Coastal Development Permit (CDP) has been approved by the City and was not appealed to the California Coastal Commission. Staff anticipates the developer will apply to the County for building permits in December.

Wave Hotel – Rough grading permit approved, work commenced with numerous inspections. Shoring plan is currently in plan check.

Victoria Apartments - Anticipated Plan Check Submittal by the end of 2025, Demo plans submitted and awaiting compliance with mitigation measures related to hazardous materials reports and construction management plans. Rough Grade & Street Improvement plans are in plan check. Building plans in for preliminary intake review and submittal anticipated in December.

Laguna Cliffs Marriott – Planning Commission approved a Coastal Development Permit on September 22, 2025 for facility and amenity improvements. Rough grading permit was issued in October, pool and landscape permits to follow.

OC Parks Outrigger Storage – OC Parks sent a formal letter to withdraw their CDP for boat storage at Baby Beach to Planning staff on November 20, 2025.

Del Prado Place (C3, Brattle Street)– Tentative completion first quarter of 2026. Certificates of Occupancy will occur in residential units prior to commercial spaces.

Project Pipeline: Projects which are approved, under review, and under construction are currently available to view on www.aboutdanapoint.com under the "work tab," development pipeline box.

Long Range Planning

Updates to SB 9, Density Bonus and ADU Ordinances are ongoing. Objective Design Standards and potential Specific Plan updates to follow in 2026.

NOTIFICATION/FOLLOW-UP: N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:

Strategic Plan Goal #5, to promote a healthy and growing economy reflecting the community's vision and values.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This report is informational in nature and there is no additional fiscal impact associated with its preparation beyond the staff time necessary to compile the information. It is estimated that it will take approximately five (5) hours of staff time per quarter to prepare this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Page No.

A. Counter Survey Results – June through October 2025 7

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT A: Counter Survey Results – June through October

City staff sends out a monthly survey asking for feedback on our guests' counter experience. These surveys are optional and anonymous, and are comprised of multiple choice, yes/no questions, and open responses.

In June through October, Staff contacted 1,243 guests via email, with 83 guests responding, giving an average response rate of 7%.

Response rates vary for a number of reasons. For example, guests who visit the public counters frequently do not always participate in the survey each month.

Question 1: Which counter(s) did you visit? (Respondents were able to choose multiple counters).

	Which counter(s) did you visit?				
	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
Planning	50%	41%	67%	62%	48%
Engineering	25%	12%	11%	15%	10%
Building	58%	82%	56%	62%	62%

Question 2: Did you get all of your questions answered?

	Did you get all of your questions answered?				
	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
Yes	100%	94%	89%	92%	86%
No	0%	6%	11%	8%	14%

Question 3: On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your experience?

On a Scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with your experience?				
JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
Average Number				
9	9	8	9	8

Question 4: How can we better serve you, or do you have any other additional comments about your experience?

This is an optional, open-ended question, and not every participant chooses to respond. See attachment for full list of comments received.

The best way to summarize these comments is to put them into categories:

- **Positive: 7 comments**
  - Themes include: Helpful, courteous, friendly
  - Highlights include:
    - "The staff was great and quick....All good"
    - "She was really helpful and gave me all that I needed at that time."
    - "None I can imagine Great staff, courteous, and friendly"
    - "Keep up the Good Work!"

- **Suggestions/Minor Complaint: 3 comments**
  - Themes include: Permit process, informational handout, lobby sign in
  - Highlights include:
    - "Applicants should have a choice of applying in person for a permit instead of only online. The website is not user friendly and it should explain clearly the steps of how to apply and list the required documentation. The Staff should be more courteous at front counters. Thank you."
    - "Create one page outlines on the building permit process for common issues. Post them online or make them available at the counter."
    - "If there is no waiting queue, why a single customers should wait while the staff is on a friendly chat with someone?"

- **Negative: 4 comments**
  - Themes include: Communication, online process, conduct
    - "The sistem on line is really confusing"
    - "I do not think A person work in public service should have hearted and discriminatory stands Simply because he is on the other side of the counter up using his authority"
    - "I didn't get an answer to my inquiry about the neighbors reconstruction that effects our property."
    - "Find a better outside consulting company to review the plans True North is beyond ridiculous"

- **Neutral: 1 comments**
  - A neutral comment was neither negative nor positive, as the participant simply did not have feedback to provide (i.e. "No Comments").

JUNE 2025 COMMENTS

City of Dana Point Customer Service Survey

Q4 How can we better serve you, or do you have any other additional comments about your experience?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	It was amazing compared to every other city!	7/7/2025 7:09 AM
2	I appreciate the availability of all members of the building and planning departments.	7/4/2025 2:20 AM
3	The on line needs more explaining as to do the process. Needs to be dummy proof. The pay portion does not work or is not clear on how to get to it	7/3/2025 4:01 PM
4	We came just before you transitioned to Etrackit, so we were given the information which was helpful. I don't think you could have provided any different service	7/3/2025 9:46 AM
5	No comments	7/3/2025 9:09 AM
6	Nope	7/1/2025 6:47 PM
7	The service is always prompt and Professional.	7/1/2025 3:49 PM
8	I waited almost 1 Hr for a permit that had been approved	7/1/2025 2:58 PM
9	None that I know of. The City's service is always excellent!	7/1/2025 12:03 PM
10	Excellent service at the counter, no building or planning department has treated me as well as Dana Point	7/1/2025 9:50 AM
11	Outstanding service from both planning & building. Don't change!	7/1/2025 9:45 AM

JULY 2025 COMMENTS

Copy of City of Dana Point Customer Service Survey

Q4 How can we better serve you, or do you have any other additional comments about your experience?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 3

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Robin Gray was very helpful. She was able to provide some helpful information. She returned my calls promptly.	8/17/2025 5:39 PM
2	I appreciate the willingness to help when I call or stop in!	8/15/2025 8:25 AM
3	None at this time	8/15/2025 8:23 AM
4	Do re-roofing permits same day!	8/15/2025 5:36 AM
5	get me an answer to my Problem/Question	8/14/2025 6:59 PM
6	Faster turnaround time on plan submittal the second time	8/14/2025 6:12 PM
7	None, staff was very helpful and knowledgeable	8/14/2025 5:44 PM
8	The staff was very helpful and answered all my questions. Judy Figuroa and Amer were clear on what I needed to do to complete my request.	8/14/2025 5:23 PM
9	Great people at the counter very helpful!	8/13/2025 9:21 AM
10	We were there to ask about getting a zoning map for short term rentals but you didn't have one to print out for us was a little disappointing.	8/13/2025 5:51 AM
11	I am not sure how you could 'fix' this overall issue. This City has developed a system that is so bureaucratic that it took over 2 years to permit a 1,000 sq. ft. addition to the rear of an existing single family dwelling! Not near any coastline or open space! The thresholds for any development are so low, that almost any remodel initiates a discretionary process. I see the City of Dana Point as not builder friendly in any way. I am a licensed architect since 1987 and have worked in almost every municipality in Southern California.	8/12/2025 7:57 PM
12	I needed a permit for a Dumpster Rental, everyone that helped me was extremely knowledgeable and professional, even a follow up call to confirm that everything had gone well! Exceptional!! In particular Toni Riley, and her boss.	8/12/2025 6:55 PM
13	Excellent Help and service	8/12/2025 6:24 PM
14	Very attentive	8/12/2025 6:12 PM

AUGUST 2025 COMMENTS

City of Dana Point Customer Service Survey

Q4 How can we better serve you, or do you have any other additional comments about your experience?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 6

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	allow some simple filing at the counter	9/4/2025 3:43 PM
2	When the planning meeting on matter this is to be rescheduled was vague. Also, staff does not listen for voice messages on a schedule. On the other hand in person they were exceptionally nice and thorough in explanation.	9/4/2025 2:36 PM
3	There are some bugs to work out in the online permit application process. My request was a simple main electrical panel upgrade, but I wasn't able to do it online. I had to come into the office and even the people working there had to ask other people what was the best way to go about it? I understand the need to go to all digital, but you gotta work the bugs out before you expect people to be filling this stuff out online, it took me three trips to the counter before I got my permit, but the staff was very helpful.	9/4/2025 2:25 PM
4	You all are awesome	9/4/2025 1:04 PM
5	Great experience	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
6	This experience was fine. We have a current issue with waiting for DP City approval for a water meter with a sewer company and South Coast Water District. We do need this approved quickly so we can move into our home! 25261 Sea Rose Ct. Thanks! Terri Forcum	9/2/2025 6:12 PM
7	No comment	9/2/2025 4:48 PM
8	There needs to be a consistent method of planning approval, not the fault of any staff but the 2 projects I have their have been disasters in planning process. their needs to be a pro-active building official like Joe, Eric or Lee were, when you were able to solve things at the counter, and the "cloud based" method of building plancheck should be done away with.	9/2/2025 4:16 PM
9	I've been trying to get a straight answer on ADU ordinance on what is and isn't allowed for over 4 years. I feel as if I am always appeased and never get a straight answer. I feel the City of Dana Point is deliberately has it set up this way by design.	9/2/2025 3:09 PM
10	The first time I came to ask a question (11:30am),there were no inspectors in the building and I was told to return at 12:30pm. When I returned, there were no inspectors...so they told me to come back at 7:30am the following day. 3 trips to get 1 questioned answered	9/2/2025 2:04 PM
11	ETrakit has issues	9/2/2025 1:49 PM
12	None at this time	9/2/2025 1:46 PM

SEPTEMBER 2025 COMMENTS

City of Dana Point Customer Service Survey

Q4 How can we better serve you, or do you have any other additional comments about your experience?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Perfect! Thank you	10/7/2025 4:27 PM
2	Thank you for all of your assistance with our project. As a homeowner, I appreciate you protecting us from contractors (from a large variety of reasons!)	10/2/2025 7:15 AM
3	I was very pleased, all questions and concerns were addressed.	10/1/2025 9:36 PM
4	Expedite plan checks. Especially after second submittal with minimal comments/corrections.	10/1/2025 7:39 PM
5	Maybe for a fee, offer a service where someone who works there, understands the forms and what is required could sit with a person to go through the forms and submit them online	10/1/2025 6:30 PM
6	Everyone was very helpful and really nice	10/1/2025 5:53 PM
7	Being that it was my first time dealing with the new system. It was a bit nerve-racking. I must've gone back-and-forth at least a half a dozen times in person because it was tough to get any callbacks or response from emails and anytime there was any corrections or additions needed. It was not complete vest the extra trips.	10/1/2025 3:31 PM
8	Greeted when I came in. Someone helped me with checking in and I met with someone in planning within 10 minutes. Everyone was very helpful and friendly. Planning took time to answer my questions.	10/1/2025 2:51 PM
9	Satisfied	10/1/2025 2:44 PM
10	Not very helpful after the permit approval deadline passed. One correction has already been completed, but we then waited an additional two weeks only to be told there are more corrections needed. Why weren't these items identified during the first review? The process was presented as if the initial correction was minor, yet we are now facing another 3+ week delay before next steps. This has been very discouraging and has slowed our ability to move forward with the project. Clearer, more thorough feedback up front would have saved significant time and frustration.	10/1/2025 2:40 PM
11	I always find you folks polite and genuinely interested in helping. My last visit we met with Amer Attassi. He was very helpful and provided us wonderful insight into our upcoming process.	10/1/2025 2:25 PM
12	all good	10/1/2025 2:21 PM

OCTOBER 2025 COMMENTS

City of Dana Point Customer Service Survey

Q4 How can we better serve you, or do you have any other additional comments about your experience?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 8

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	It's all good	11/5/2025 4:43 PM
2	Applicants should have a choice of applying in person for a permit instead of only online. The website is not user friendly and it should explain clearly the steps of how to apply and list the required documentation. The Staff should be more courteous at front counters. Thank you.	11/5/2025 2:57 PM
3	The staff was great and quick....All good	11/5/2025 11:29 AM
4	She was really helpful and gave me all that I needed at that time.	11/5/2025 10:48 AM
5	Create one page outlines on the building permit process for common issues. Post them online or make them available at the counter.	11/5/2025 10:33 AM
6	No	11/5/2025 10:28 AM
7	None I can imagine Great staff, courteous, and friendly	11/5/2025 10:23 AM
8	We are only in our beginning stages ... so far so good	11/4/2025 7:13 AM
9	The sistem on line is really confusing	11/3/2025 5:39 PM
10	I do not think A person work in public service should have hearted and discriminatory stands Simply because he is on the other side of the counter up using his authority	11/3/2025 1:48 PM
11	I didn't get an answer to my inquiry about the neighbors reconstruction that effects our property.	11/3/2025 12:02 PM
12	keep up the same	11/3/2025 10:41 AM
13	If there is no waiting queue, why a single customers should wait while the staff is on a friendly chat with someone?	11/3/2025 10:32 AM
14	Keep up the Good Work!	11/3/2025 10:29 AM
15	Find a better outside consulting company to review the plans True North is beyond ridiculous	11/3/2025 10:13 AM