



**HISTORIC
FRANKLIN
TENNESSEE**

**CITY OF FRANKLIN
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION**

A meeting of the Development Services Advisory Commission was held at Eastern Flank Battlefield Park Event Facility, on Tuesday, November 4th, 2025, 8:00 am – 9:00 am.

Committee Members

Ben Crenshaw, Chair	P
Mary McGowan, Vice Chair	A
Kate McDonald	P
Claudia ZuaZua	P
Mike Hathaway	P
Scotty Bernick	P
Daniel Jones	P
Paige Parham	A
Dana Kose	P
Michael Walters Young	P
Matt Brown	P

Employees Present

Vernon Gerth, Assistant City Administrator
Walter Denton, Assistant City Administrator
Emily Wright, Dir. of Planning & Sustainability
Amy Diaz-Barriga, Asst. Director of Planning & Sustainability
Bill Squires, Assistant City Attorney
Katherine Harelson, Budget & Performance Analyst
Presley Parker, Development Services IT Specialist
Andrew Orr, Long-Range Planning Supervisor
Joel Aguilera, Planner II
Skye Gerhart, Management Fellow

The purpose of the regular meeting will be to discuss matters regarding Development Services and will include the following items:

Ben Crenshaw began the meeting at 8:00 am.

1. Approval of Minutes/Review of Meeting Notes from September 9, 2025, meeting.

- Meeting minutes were approved by acclamation.

2. Introduction of New Assistant City Administrator Walter Denton.

- Katherine Harelson opened the meeting by introducing the City of Franklin's new Assistant City Administrator, Walter Denton. He will be taking over for Vernon Gerth, who plans to retire at the end of the year.
- Walter introduced himself to the Commission stating that he comes from O'Fallon, Illinois. O'Fallon is a high-growth area around St. Louis, so he has experience working with the development community and helping manage growth for a community.

3. Discussion of 2026 Meeting Schedule and Potential Topics.

- Ben Crenshaw began the discussion by saying that he would like to get input from the Commission on how they would like to proceed this year. In the past, the Commission has been a mixture of staff-driven and Commission-driven topics. His goal is to narrow down a list of topics that the Commission would like to discuss in the upcoming year so that everyone is prepared.
- Alderman Matt Brown responded that the Commission is twofold: they make recommendations on process, but they can also make recommendations on policy. In the past, the Commission has only focused on process, but he would like to expand that more into the policy realm and really utilize the experience in this group. Two of the biggest issues that the Board is dealing with are housing and traffic, and it would be beneficial to utilize the experience that is in this room.
 - Michael Walters Young added that it's important that the Commission needs something to look at to make recommendations to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. That adds time to items before they get to the Board for discussion.
- Vernon Gerth announced that the City is currently going through a transit study and it is available for public comment. He said that once the study is completed, the group will have time to present the study to the Commission if desired.
- Aldermen Brown added that another big topic is the IDD (Infrastructure Development District). That is a financing tool for new development that passed in the State Legislature earlier this year. This allows developers to finance horizontal infrastructure and impact fees. The City can in turn create criteria that a development must meet to use the financing tool in the City of Franklin.
 - Ben responded that his company utilizes these tools frequently in states like Texas. It is very new to Tennessee, but it is essentially "adding" to your HOA for the horizontal infrastructure. There is a lot of interest, but no one wants to be the first one in at this point. He is happy to help share information regarding the Infrastructure Development Districts.
 - Mike Hathaway asked what kind of projects would not be suitable for this kind of financing tool.
 - Scotty Bernick responded that rental properties are often not suitable for tools like IDDs.
 - Alderman Brown said that the downside of this tool is that it can be used as an accelerator of growth. He wants it to be a differentiator of growth instead. He sees this tool as a way to solve some complex challenges to attainable housing in Franklin.
- Scotty takes the discussion back to the original question. The original goal of this Commission is to focus on the development process. He feels like their responsibility is to step up and lead these conversations forward and help make recommendations to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.
- Michael asked if there are topics that Commissioners are hearing from their peers that need to be brought up in meetings.
 - Ben responded that they get a mixture of big picture topics that deal more with policy and topics that lead to the specific details in a process. He would like to see a mixture of these topics addressed in the future.
- Claudia Zua Zua added to the Commission that Williamson, Inc. was presenting the results of a recently completed housing study and invited the Commission to attend that event.
- Dana Kose said that she would like to see more focus on smart developments and adding different modes of transportation to new developments.
- Scotty finishes the conversation by reminding the group that he doesn't want to sacrifice the efficiency of the processes that are already in place.
- Katherine briefly showed the official schedule for 2026 and solicited feedback from the Commission on any potential major conflicts. There were none, but it was determined that this item would be brought forward at the January meeting.

4. Presentation and Discussion of Draft Planning Map Redesign.

- Joel Aguilera began his presentation stating that the goal of this group is to always improve how we tell Franklin's story. Staff has focused a lot on the last few months on how we can better report development activity in the community.
 - At the presentation of the last development activity report, it was discussed with the Planning Commission on how staff show even more information and address questions such as how growth is happening rather than just what is happening.
 - Staff reached out to peer cities to research their development reporting strategies and found a lot of paths to engaging the community and sharing accurate and timely information.
 - McKinney, Texas was a community that staff focused on in their research. It is a growing suburban community in Texas that has similar planning goals to Franklin. They had a development activity dashboard and story map that was both visually appealing and informative.
 - Joel provided several other communities with different development dashboards. Some had different categories of projects, descriptions of each development, the stage of a project, and contact information for questions.
 - Goals for this dashboard are that it is user-friendly, timely, interactive, accessible, and visually appealing, and automated.
- The current recommendation is to show developments in the current year that are broken into several tabs, focus on specific applications, and leave the trend analysis for the development report.
- Mike applauded the work done by staff. He said that the most important thing is that the map is searchable. He also asked if AI is being used at all for this map.
- Scotty said that the categories presented make the most sense. Also keeping the map simple is key, so taking advantage of hyperlinks and clean layouts will be great. He also preferred being able to see the lot shape on the map.
- Kate McDonald said that she worries about only showing projects happening in the current year. It could cut off projects that are submitted in December or confuse residents when projects are under construction, and it's goes beyond a year.
- Ben ended the discussion by asking the Commission to continue looking at this information and provide feedback to himself and Katherine offline.
- **Next meeting – Tuesday, January 6th, 2026**

5. Adjourn.