

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

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June 6, 2024

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REPORT ON BOARD MOTION REGARDING EXPANDING EPIC-LA TO STREAMLINE COUNTY PERMITTING AND ENTITLEMENT PROCESSES TO ADDRESS THE REGIONAL HOUSING CRISIS (AGENDA ITEM 24, JUNE 6, 2023, AGENDA ITEM 61E, JUNE 22, 2021, AND AGENDA ITEM 42, AUGUST 4, 2015)

On June 6, 2023, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) instructed the Department of Regional Planning (DRP), in collaboration with Public Works (PW), Chief Executive Office (CEO), Fire, Parks and Recreation (DPR), Public Health (DPH), Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTC) and Economic Opportunity (DEO) to expedite implementation of the 2023 Gartner Study recommendations relating to Electronic Permitting and Inspections—County of Los Angeles (EPIC-LA). The Board instructed DRP to report back quarterly on progress of the implementation work, notably the following:

- 1) Broaden the EPIC-LA internal support structure and reformulate the Governance model, consistent with the Gartner Consulting Incorporated (Gartner) recommendations and including the CEO, to ensure comprehensive, organized, and responsive decision-making for use of resources, system development, and strategic direction;
 - a. Ensure that the primary Governance representatives for each Department is at the level of Deputy Director or higher, and require centralized reporting and coordination under the direct purview of said representative;

- b. Identify immediate funding for consultant services to assist with organizing, structuring, and implementing the recommended Governance model.

This directive is complete. Departments worked extensively with Gartner during the months of June and July 2023. The Executive Committee, co-chaired by DRP and PW, met on July 20, 2023 and adopted a new Governance model. The Executive Committee directed the Steering Committee to meet and provide appropriate resources for all subcommittees.

- 2) Establish a plan for a working foundation for the new customer centric service model, to be implemented in the next 9 to 12 months, including a structure for cross-departmental teams accountable for streamlining EPIC-LA enhancements;

In progress. This work is ongoing. Driven in part by the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 budget process, departments have discussed and strategized on how to implement the new service model in relation to staffing, notably in the context of the budget limitations expected in FY 2024-2025. This work will continue to be advanced by the subgroups and Steering Committee at the direction of the Executive Committee.

During this quarter, work to implement the new Governance model continued. The Steering Committee, co-chaired by DRP and PW, met monthly and directed the activities of the four subgroups (Interdepartmental Consistency Committee, Customer Experience Group, Consolidated Technical Committee and Organizational Change Management). Each subgroup meets regularly in support of this task.

- 3) Redesign and enhance the customer interface with EPIC-LA;
 - a. Including consultation with the DEO as a Governance Committee advisor in support of the EPIC-LA customer interface;
 - b. Re-envision the customer experience and implement equity-based solutions;
 - c. Solutions should be informed through engagement with and input from a stakeholder group that includes large and small developers, as well as mission-driven developers, such as those with developments for childcare facilities, retail small businesses, nonprofits, and community spaces.

In progress. This work is ongoing and is being directed by the Steering Committee and subgroups in consultation with the Executive Committee. Departments have prepared a work order amendment utilizing Gartner to assist with this task as it expands on the existing EPIC-LA Customer Self-Service portal. The work order

amendment and associated funding has been reviewed by the Information Technology Investment Board (ITIB) and will be on the July 23, 2024, Board agenda for final approval. Departments also continue to advance a pilot of Tyler Technologies, Inc. (Tyler) Decision Engine solution, which has the potential to significantly improve the public's interaction with EPIC-LA. Finally, the County recently signed an agreement with Tyler to explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and its potential ability to transform customer interactions within EPIC-LA.

- 4) Complete the current service model cross-departmental integration and implementations at Fire, and TTC;

In progress. TTC has a firm go-live of July 1, 2024, and Fire has a target go live for the end of 2024.

TTC has had initial discussions with Fire regarding their onboarding onto EPIC-LA and their integration into the Business Licensing workflow to approve business license applications electronically. Fire is researching the number of licenses required for user licenses and funding. TTC has also been coordinating with DRP on electronic consultation and clearance of Business License referrals to DRP.

Fire has had ongoing meetings with Tyler on the proposals to build out and provide training for Phase 3 (EPIC-LA to inspection field offices) and will send the financial package to the EPIC-LA Executive Committee.

The Board further directed DRP, PW, Fire, DPR, DPH and TTC, in consultation with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and CEO-Classifications, to report back in writing in 90 days on the following:

- 1) Current staffing structures, staffing levels, and workload for the groups within the departments involved in the permitting and entitlement process, including:
 - a. Staffing shortages and vacancies, including specific positions and length of time vacant; and
 - b. Current access to and use of consultants to provide aforementioned services for permitting and entitlement;
- 2) Identified hurdles for hiring new and retaining existing staff, including identified salary structures that lead to low to no applicants for specific positions, existing classification challenges, as well as existing hiring processes internal to each Department, the CEO, and DHR;

In progress. Departments have worked with the CEO to review salary data and structures, ongoing recruitment and retention challenges and the staffing needs required to support EPIC-LA. Departments will continue to collaborate with the CEO through the FY 2024-25 Supplemental Budget process to refine collective EPIC-LA staffing and funding needs. The Executive committee will review and approve the consolidated request, including staffing/funding recommendations, and submit to the CEO for consideration. This will allow recommendations to be made within the context of the overall budget and numerous competing funding priorities and requests.

- 3) Review each Department's fee structure with the Auditor-Controller to maximize cost recovery for the implementation of the enhanced EPIC-LA system;

In progress. Departments have discussed fee structures with the Auditor-Controller. DRP, PW, and CEO have met on multiple occasions with Auditor-Controller staff; research and discussion are ongoing.

- 4) Reporting on current plan review and plan check processes, including:
- a. Current turnaround times for plan review and plan check;
 - b. Historic turnaround times for the last six months and one year, with turnaround time measured from applicant's submittal for plan review to return of plan with comments;
 - c. Ideal turnaround times to ensure timely and responsive customer service; and
 - d. The development and recommendation of key metrics to be publicly reported on a monthly basis through a unified, forward-facing website and dashboard for all departments, to track the success of the expansion of EPIC-LA;

Complete. This information was provided as part of the September 20, 2023, quarterly report.

- 5) Complete the EPIC-LA Interface with the DPH systems in the next 15 to 18 months;

DPH has included work on the EPIC-LA interface to the upgrade of their Environmental Health Permit and Inspection Management System. This work will be supported under Amendment Number 11 to Agreement Number PH-002200 with Accela, Inc. (Accela), and was approved by the Board on September 12, 2023. This work includes development of an interface with EPIC-LA. Departments have met with the Accela and Tyler teams monthly since February to discuss schedule and scope; this work is ongoing. In addition, funding for similar Accela-Tyler

interface work for the Fire was recommended by ITIB for approval by the Board of Supervisors and will be on the same July 21 Board agenda.

- 6) Develop a decision tree to support streamlined customer interaction with the County, clearly defined permitting requirements at project initiation and increased automation;

In progress. This work will be advanced by the Steering Committee and subgroups at the direction of the Executive Committee. The Steering Committee is discussing development of pilot application workflows using the existing Tyler Decision Engine and work already completed by department staff.

- 7) Begin negotiations with Tyler to extend the existing County contract for five years plus one optional one-year extension; and

Existing agreement set to expire in June 2025. Departments are collaborating to identify critical needs that would be part of a contract extension for the Tyler EnerGov software, including the integration of a permitting solution for the Department of Economic Opportunity (sidewalk vending). This work is being closely monitored and directed by the Executive Committee.

The Board further directed DHR and CEO to:

- 1) Ensure that the Directors of the Departments involved in EPIC-LA include a MAPP Priority beginning FY 2023-24 that supports the implementation of the Gartner recommendations, notably the new service model, and report back annually during the MAPP review process until implemented or otherwise sunset; and

Complete. EPIC-LA MAPP Priority has been developed for Department Heads and Chief Deputies. Priority has been reviewed and approved by CEO and communicated to departments for inclusion in FY 2023-24 MAPP.

- 2) Work with the EPIC-LA Departments to expedite the hiring process, reclassification studies and related efforts, to overcome staffing shortages, case backlogs and long turnaround times, all key findings of the Gartner report;

Work related to expediting the hiring process, reclassification studies and overcoming staffing shortages, case backlogs and long turnaround times is in progress.

Lastly, the Board further directed the CEO to report back during the Supplemental Budget phase on the following:

- 1) Identification of alternative funding solutions to support efficient permitting operations and full implementation of the Gartner recommendations for all EPIC-LA departments;
 - a. Collaborate with Fire to review the funding model for EPIC-LA within the Fire Prevention Division;
 - b. Work with the DPH to review the funding model for EPIC-LA and the DPH system within the Environmental Health Division;
- 2) Identification of funding during the FY 2023-24 Supplemental Budget phase so that the County can proceed with department-level short-term solutions, including additional staffing and one-time funding, as recommended in the updated Gartner Study;
- 3) In consultation with the EPIC-LA departments, study the current alignment of development permitting services across multiple departments, determine whether services are operating optimally, and identify improved service delivery by shifting services within the County's permitting departments; and

These items are in progress and will continue to be evaluated by the CEO as-needed.

With regard to funding solutions, departments have met with the Auditor-Controller to discuss comprehensive funding options. The Auditor-Controller has recommended creation of an EPIC-LA budget unit that would allow comprehensive Countywide budget tracking related to EPIC-LA as well as department-specific review. This review and discussion is ongoing with the CEO and Auditor-Controller, with a formal recommendation expected as part of the FY 2024-25 Supplemental Budget process. Additionally, work is under way to explore establishment of a technology fee, with a percentage of revenues allocated to the EPIC-LA budget unit.

- 4) In coordination with the EPIC-LA departments, consolidate reporting on this motion with current quarterly reporting on previous EPIC-LA and development services motions, next report due in 90 days and continuing quarterly thereafter.

This report provides the status of all work related to the EPIC-LA Gartner Study recommendations, including the motions of June 6, 2023, June 22, 2021, and August 4, 2015.

Additional Background

EPIC-LA is a multi-phased project to automate County operations in land use planning, permitting, enforcement case management, inspections, and code enforcement.

On June 24, 2014, the Board approved Contract No. 78227 between the County of Los Angeles and Tyler, for EPIC-LA Phase 1 to support DRP's implementation of Tyler's EnerGov Permit Management Software Suite, referred to as the EPIC-LA system, to streamline and automate their land entitlement, inspections, and code enforcement processes. EPIC-LA Phase 1 was completed on November 30, 2015.

On June 2, 2015, on a Board motion by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, the Board directed the Interim CEO and Chief Information Office (CIO) to contract with an independent third-party to assess EPIC-LA to ensure that it is the appropriate technology to support PW's workflows and other departments in the near future and to report back to the Board within 60 days. Gartner was identified as the best consultant to address this Board motion.

On July 30, 2015, the Interim CEO and CIO reported back on Gartner's assessment, which concluded that expanding EPIC-LA to PW is an appropriate next step for the County. Gartner's report provided recommendations for moving forward that mitigated potential risk areas in the EPIC-LA implementation.

Following the report recommendations, the Board approved amending the County's Contract with Tyler on August 4, 2015, to support the implementation of EPIC-LA Phase 2 for PW, which included Entitlement and Public Infrastructure Engineering, Public Right-of-Way Permits, Inspections, Code Enforcement, and Unincorporated County Jurisdiction Building Permits and Inspections. This project phase was implemented on February 20, 2017, and provides a single-integrated system supporting operational improvements for core land development and building permitting processes.

EPIC-LA Phase 3, completed on July 31, 2017, expanded EPIC-LA functionality to incorporate the DPR Quimby fees.

EPIC-LA Phase 4, completed on August 31, 2019, implemented EPIC-LA to support the Fire's land development process; environmental impact reports; forestry oak tree permitting; forestry fuel modification plan review process; and fire engineering plan review for buildings, fire alarms, and fire sprinklers.

EPIC-LA Phase 5, the project's only active phase, will extend EPIC-LA's scope to provide online business license application, data collection, and payment processing services, and migrate the TTC's business license program onto the EPIC-LA platform.

In addition, there are other County departments and agencies that are peripheral users of the EPIC-LA system. The Assessor's Interdepartmental Data Exchange has been established to share property tax administration information and leverages EPIC-LA data. The DPH uses EPIC-LA to support their Environmental Health Land Use Program. The Los Angeles County Development Authority uses EPIC-LA to track affordable housing projects.

After the June 22, 2021, Board motion, the County engaged the services of Gartner during fall 2022 to review the progress of implementing EPIC-LA in the County, identify areas that need attention and clarify the path forward. Gartner's final report, released in February 2023, is attached for reference.

Next Report

The next update in response to this Board motion will be provided on September 6, 2024.

If you have any questions regarding this progress report, please contact Dennis Slavin at (213) 974-6405 or via email at dslavin@planning.lacounty.gov.

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c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
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Consumer and Business Affairs
Economic Opportunity
Fire
Internal Services
Los Angeles County Development Authority
Parks and Recreation
Public Health
Public Works
Regional Planning
Treasurer and Tax Collector