

Initiatives to Improve the Permitting Process for the Community and Industry

To provide a better permitting experience for citizens and industry, Administration has undertaken a number of initiatives intended to expedite and improve the timelines and transparency of the development and building permitting process. The following initiatives which are currently underway are expected to have a substantial effect on the permitting process and timelines:

- eServices - online applications, payment, and service enhancements for single detached, semi-detached, and row housing applications. House Combo applications will be accepted online in April 2017.
- Comprehensive assessment of the existing permitting process to identify opportunities for improvement and develop an implementation roadmap by late 2017. This will address most forms of residential housing including single detached, semi-detached, row housing, and multi-family residential. For example, this work could explore the potential for overlapping review processes which would enable building permit review to occur in parallel with the development permit review.

Many of the changes which Administration has undertaken to improve the permitting process are fairly recent, so their impacts on timelines may not yet be fully realized. Initiatives which have been recently completed include:

- Removal of the notification fee for Class B development permits as of 2017 to streamline the notification process. Previously waiting for applicants to pay the notification fee had been a source of delay.
- As of early 2017, an initial screening of residential applications is now completed within three days of assignment to ensure that any necessary circulations to other civic agencies are started as early as possible.
- 2017 amendments to the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay and other Zoning Bylaw text amendments, which are intended in part to reduce the number of required variances for infill development, thus resulting in fewer Class B development permits.
- Infill pre-application meetings launched in July 2016, which aid in application completeness and quality by identifying potential issues and information that will be required and enabling the applicant to address these issues prior to making a formal application.
- The launch of the City's infill website in April 2016, which includes resources outlining the permitting process and requirements.
- 2016 formation of the Infill Liaison Team, staff whose duties include education, outreach, and support of complex infill inquiries. This frees up permitting staff to dedicate more time to review.
- As of Spring 2017, greater quality control at application intake screening both the development permit and building permit applications for

- completeness, while previously the building permit application was screened following development permit approval. Concurrent screening allows applicants to address missing building permit information during review of the development permit.
- As of Spring 2017, approval of partial footing and foundation permits has been automated immediately following the development permit approval for select dwelling types outside the mature neighbourhoods. This is an expansion of a process that began in June 2016 for Expedited House Combo permits.

In addition, Administration will explore several other initiatives with the potential to have a positive effect on timelines. These include:

- A pilot program for advance variance identification by the applicant, which would allow for the triage and distribution of applications based on complexity.
- Consideration of only accepting complete applications for processing. Currently Administration will accept applications in varying degrees of completeness.
- Revisiting the training requirements and audit processes for the current Expedited House Combo program.
- Following the launch of major components of eServices, Administration will review the possibility of expanding the Expedited program to accommodate lower volume builders in late 2017.
- Delaying the implementation date of Zoning Bylaw text amendments to minimize impacts on applications in progress.
- Increased education on regulation changes to stakeholders in the development industry via training and various tools and resources.
- Increased education and outreach on submission requirements for builders that repeatedly submit incomplete applications or require more information during permit review.
- On-going development and updating of training for permitting staff to support consistent and timely permit review.

Administration sees opportunities for improvement in many different aspects of the permit process. Some of the initiatives listed have wider applicability to a variety of different permit types.