

Considerations for Future Target Setting

Predictability

A consistent and predictable permitting process is highly valued by community and the building and development industry. It therefore stands to reason that any target should be able to reflect a degree of certainty, which may require consideration of variances, community consultation, multiple plan revisions, and other factors not currently recognized. Shaping targets to better reflect these variables will help to improve predictability.

Application Completeness

For the purpose of time reporting, timelines are currently measured from the time the application is made, regardless of whether the application is submitted as complete or fees have been paid. This practice has the effect of inflating processing times, yet it is beyond the ability of Administration to reduce this time. A prudent approach for future targets would be to consider the application review to have started only once fees have been paid and development and building permit applications are submitted with all of the information required to begin the review. And, if there are differences in understanding of needed information, the review of processes underway should work to clarify submission materials.

Processing Resources

Competing priorities must be taken into consideration when establishing targets. Reducing a target review time for one permit type may shift staff away from other duties or permit types, which may suffer as a result. Presently nine development permitting staff are responsible for reviewing development in mature neighbourhoods while seven are specifically allocated to greenfield development, despite the fact that greenfield applications outnumber infill applications approximately four to one. In addition, the experience and technical skills required of staff are greater for mature neighbourhood review than for greenfield. This illustrates the relative complexity of infill applications, but also suggests that placing a greater emphasis on infill review relative to other residential development may put more stress on the timing of applications outside of the mature neighbourhoods.

Rapidly changing processes, large provincial regulatory changes, community expectations and industry needs must be taken into consideration when establishing targets. Examples include:

- Significant demand on development permitting staff for Zoning Bylaw amendments, pre-application meetings, and increased time for Development Appeal Board hearings resulting from a more engaged public and increased scrutiny on infill-related issues.

Attachment 6

- The need for higher skill levels for processes historically staffed with entry level work teams.
- Acceptability of initiating application processes (work time) where fees have not been paid or information is incomplete or subject to change.