

Analysis of Development Permit Variances - 2016 Annual Report

Recommendation:

That the April 19, 2017, Sustainable Development report CR_4528, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report provides information on planning approvals and development permit variances in 2016.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the June 10, 2013, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration prepare an annual report on planning approvals that will include an analysis of development permit variances.

Report

Administration issued 19,524 development permits from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016. This is a six percent (1,277 permit) decrease from 2015. Nine categories of development were selected for a detailed analysis of variances issued representing 7,747 permits for:

- Single Detached Housing
- Garage and Garden Suites
- Semi-detached Housing
- Multi-family Residential Projects
- House Additions
- Accessory Buildings
- Uncovered Decks
- Residential Sales Centres
- Major Commercial and Industrial Projects

Issued Development Permits

Individual development permits for these uses were examined and the variances issued were sorted according to the regulations varied. The permits were sorted by those issued in the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay and those in established and new neighbourhoods to highlight situational factors which may influence a variance. The detail of this analysis can be found in Attachment 1 - Issued Development Permits and Variance Analysis.

Historical Comparison of Variance Rates and Issued Permits

Administration also undertook a historical comparison of variance rates between 2015 and 2016.

Key findings within the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay (compared to permits issued in 2015):

- 25 percent reduction in the rate of variances for Garage and Garden Suites
- 50 percent increase in the rate of variances for Semi-detached Houses
- 13 percent reduction in the rate of variances for Accessory buildings
- 23 percent increase in the rate of variances for Uncovered Decks

Key findings outside the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay (compared to permits issued in 2015):

- 67 percent reduction in the rate of variances for Single Detached Housing
- 25 percent reduction in the rate of variances for Multi-family Residential Projects
- 40 percent increase in the rate of variances for House Additions

Further details can be found in Attachment 2 - Historical Comparison of Issued Permits.

Analysis of Subdivision and Development Appeal Board Decisions

Analysis of Subdivision and Development Appeal Board decisions was undertaken for this report. The findings show that the Board upheld 39 (60 percent) and overturned six (9 percent) of approvals issued by the City. The Board had no jurisdiction in 20 (31 percent) approval appeal submissions. The Board upheld 30 (29 percent) and overturned 63 (60 percent) of refusals issued by the City. The Board had no jurisdiction in 12 (11 percent) refusal appeal submissions. Further details are provided in Attachment 3 - Subdivision and Development Appeal Board Appeals Summary 2016.

Implications and Future Actions

Administration increased database efficiency for the creation of this report by collaborating with other City departments for data collection processes. This has resulted in a more efficient and accurate reporting of development permit variance data. Administration continues to review frequently varied regulations in Zoning Bylaw 12800 to ensure alignment between policy and practice, and to inform future text amendments. Areas of focus for this year's work plan include improved regulations for multi-family housing through the Medium Scale Multi-family Review, as well as the implementation of amendments to the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay and Garage and Garden Suites. These projects will aim to reduce variance rates to provide more certain outcomes for the development permit process, which are anticipated to be reflected in future annual reports.

Policy

The analysis of variances helps provide timely information to policy makers and the public on current development trends. This report may identify regulations that require updating in Zoning Bylaw 12800, and therefore supports *The Way We Grow*, Edmonton's Municipal Development Plan:

- 3.2.1.4: “Provide an open planning process which involves residents in policy development and planning for growth and change.”

Public Engagement

This information report was shared with key stakeholders for information including Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Infill Development Edmonton Association, Canadian Home Builders Association-Edmonton Region, and Urban Development Institute-Edmonton Region.

Metrics, Targets and Outcomes

Metrics	Targets	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of development permits issued within the nine permit categories analyzed in 2016: 7,747 and 2015: 9,371 • Total number of variances issued within the nine permit categories analyzed in 2016: 1,031 (13%) and 2015: 1,383 (15%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in proportion of variances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater certainty in the development permit application process

Attachments

1. Issued Development Permits and Variance Analysis
2. Historical Comparison of Issued Permits, 2015 - 2016
3. Subdivision and Development Appeal Board Appeals Summary, 2016

Others Reviewing this Report

- C. Campbell, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement