

NO: R205

COUNCIL DATE: November 28, 2022

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **November 24, 2022**

FROM: **Acting General Manager, Planning & Development** FILE: **6630-01**
General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Finance

SUBJECT: **Quarterly Update on the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines and Process Improvements – Q3 2022**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development, Engineering, and Finance Departments recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Endorse the conclusion of the Extended Hours Pilot Program, effective December 22, 2022.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide Council with a quarterly update on the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines for Single-Family Building Permits, Tenant Improvement Building Permits, and Rezoning Applications and the corresponding process improvements to support these timelines, as well as to seek Council's endorsement to conclude the Extended Hours Pilot Program, effective December 22, 2022.

BACKGROUND

Continuous improvement is the foundation of the City's approach to enhancing customer service. Through feedback from the development industry to staff and Council, it was indicated that a dramatic shift in the service delivery ethos was necessary. To that end, on October 18, 2021, Council endorsed staff to implement guaranteed processing times for Single-Family Building Permits, Tenant Improvement Building Permits, and Rezoning Applications.

The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines seek to improve the speed and predictability in the land development approval process, thereby demonstrating the City's commitment to the development industry and to improving access to housing and affordability in Surrey. The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines provide confidence that the City, working in partnership with land development applicants, is doing everything within its power to meet permit processing targets.

Processing times are focused on deliverables within the City’s control, acting diligently to monitor compliance with regulations, including the BC Building Code and City Bylaws, seeking to provide land development applicants with increased predictability for complete submissions.

The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines do not provide fixed-time permit issuance. To achieve success, the applicant and City staff must work in partnership, towards a common goal, with defined roles and responsibilities.

Each application is unique and may experience some variability in the processing time, based on the completeness and accuracy of the submissions and the experience of the applicant. Incomplete applications, including missing required documentation, incompatibility with zoning requirements, and plan deficiencies, may not align with the processing time and the time to issue a permit. The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines cannot be achieved when applicants are unresponsive or unwilling to work with staff to resolve issues or deficiencies on applications.

Since the introduction of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines on October 18, 2021, staff have progressively implemented the necessary tools to meet Council’s direction. Through a series of quarterly Corporate Reports, with the most recent update provided in Corporate R140; 2022, a copy of which is attached as Appendix “I”, staff have clarified the approval process and permit processing time calculations, developed key performance indicators, and initiated process improvements to enhance capacity to meet the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines.

DISCUSSION

Staff have made significant progress in delivering the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines. Monitoring reports have been implemented for all in-scope permit types, to provide managers and staff with insights into the processing time of applications. Timelines are summarized in the following table.

Permit Type	Established Guaranteed Targets	Current Processing Time	Quarterly Processing Time			
		October 2022	Q3 2022	Q2 2022	Q1 2022	Q4 2021
Single-Family	10 weeks	5.4 weeks	7.7 weeks	9.0 weeks	9.4 weeks	14.6 weeks
Tenant Improvements	10 weeks	10.1 weeks	9.6 weeks	9.4 weeks	8.0 weeks	7.0 weeks

Permit Type	Established Guaranteed Targets	Current Processing Time	Quarterly Processing Time			
		October 2022	Q3 2022	Q2 2022	Q1 2022	Q4 2021
Rezoning, Single-Family	12 weeks	10.6 weeks	12.2 weeks	11 weeks	8.6 weeks	Not enough data
Rezoning, Multi-Family, Commercial, Industrial (excluding plan amendments)	16 weeks to 20 weeks*	10.6 weeks	7.6 weeks	9.8 weeks	Not enough data	Not enough data
Site Servicing Reviews (related to Servicing Agreements)	2.5 weeks	2.9 weeks	2.8 weeks	2.4 weeks	2.4 weeks	2.9 weeks

* for projects requiring Advisory Design Panel review

Single-Family Building Permits Processing Times

The Single-Family Building Permits Processing Time is measured from the submission of a complete building permit application to staff providing the applicant with an issued permit or a list of deficiencies to resolve, as shown in Figure 1. Note that for infill permits the application is deemed complete when the site servicing plans have been accepted.

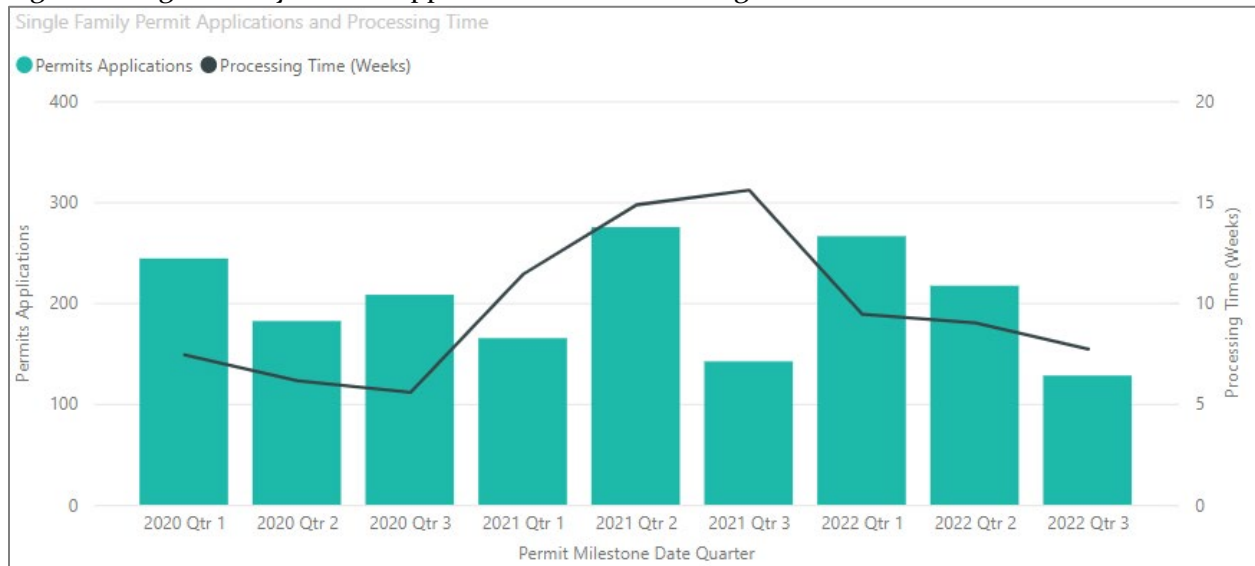
Annually, the City receives an average of 931 new Single-Family Building Permit applications.

The City received 128 new Single-Family Building Permit applications in Q3 2022, which is 9.8% lower than the number of applications received in the same quarter last year. Year-to-date, the City has received 4.9% more applications than last year.

In Q3 2022, Single-Family Building Permit applications were processed with a processing time of 7.7 weeks. This represents a 14% reduction in processing time as compared to Q2 2022.

The current processing time for a Single-Family Building Permit is 5.4 weeks, based on the processing time in the last 30 days.

Figure 1: Single Family Permit Applications and Processing Time



Tenant Improvement Building Permits Processing Times

The Tenant Improvement Building Permit Processing Time is measured from the submission of a complete building permit application to staff providing the applicant with an issued permit or a list of deficiencies to resolve, as shown in Figure 2.

Annually, the City receives an average of 595 Tenant Improvement Building Permit applications.

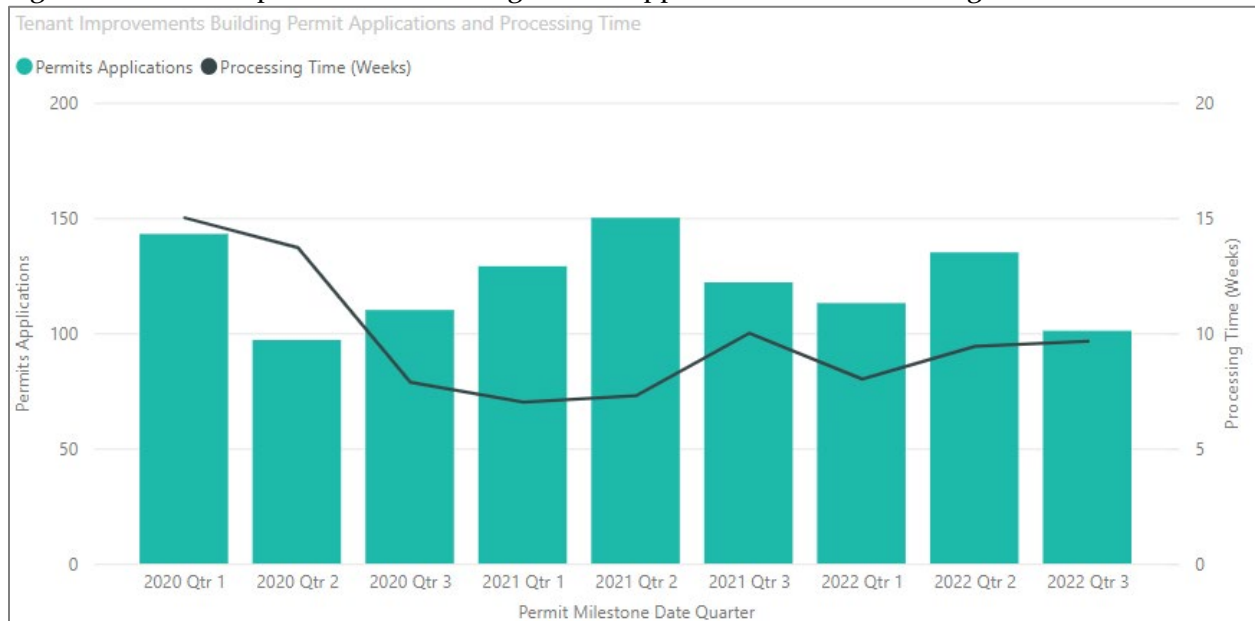
The City received 101 Tenant Improvement Building Permit applications in Q3 2022, which is 17.2% lower than the number of applications received in the same quarter last year. Year-to-date, the number of new applications is 12.9% less than last year.

In Q3 2022, complete applications were processed with a processing time of 9.6 weeks. This represents a 2% increase in processing time as compared to Q2 2022, but is still below the established target guarantee of 10 weeks.

The current processing time for a Tenant Improvement Building Permit is 10.1 weeks, based on the processing time in the last 30 days.

The Q3 processing time has been negatively affected by staffing vacancies. New staff have been hired to increase the process capacity of Tenant Improvement Permits and lower the processing time below the target. Staff will continue to monitor the current processing time and volume of applications and will make further adjustments as needed to maintain service levels.

Figure 2: Tenant Improvements Building Permit Applications and Processing Time



Rezoning

The Rezoning Permitting Time is measured from the City receiving a complete application, including a preliminary review and resolution of any major issues, to the application being introduced to Council for First and Second Readings, as shown in Figure 3.

Annually, the City receives an average of 120 new Rezoning Applications, including simple rezoning, rezoning with Development Permit (“DP”), and rezoning with DP and Plan Amendments. Over 44% of rezoning applications contain plan amendments and are not part of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines program, due to being inconsistent with City Plans, which leads to longer processing times, resubmissions, and potential denials.

The Rezoning Processing Times have been adjusted to account for the August Council break and the City Hall closure for the September 19, 2022 day of mourning to mark the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Simple Rezoning

In Q3 2022, the City received nine simple Rezoning Applications (rezoning applications with no corresponding DP). Year-to-date, the City has received 30 simple Rezoning Applications, which is equal to the number of applications received last year.

In Q3 2022, the City processed eight simple Rezoning Applications with a processing time of 12.2 weeks, slightly above the 12 week target. Additional measures have been put in place to monitor the progress of applications and improve proactive measures to communicate with applicants’ submission expectations to meet the timelines.

The current processing time for simple Rezoning Applications is 10.6 weeks, based on applications processed in the last 90 days.

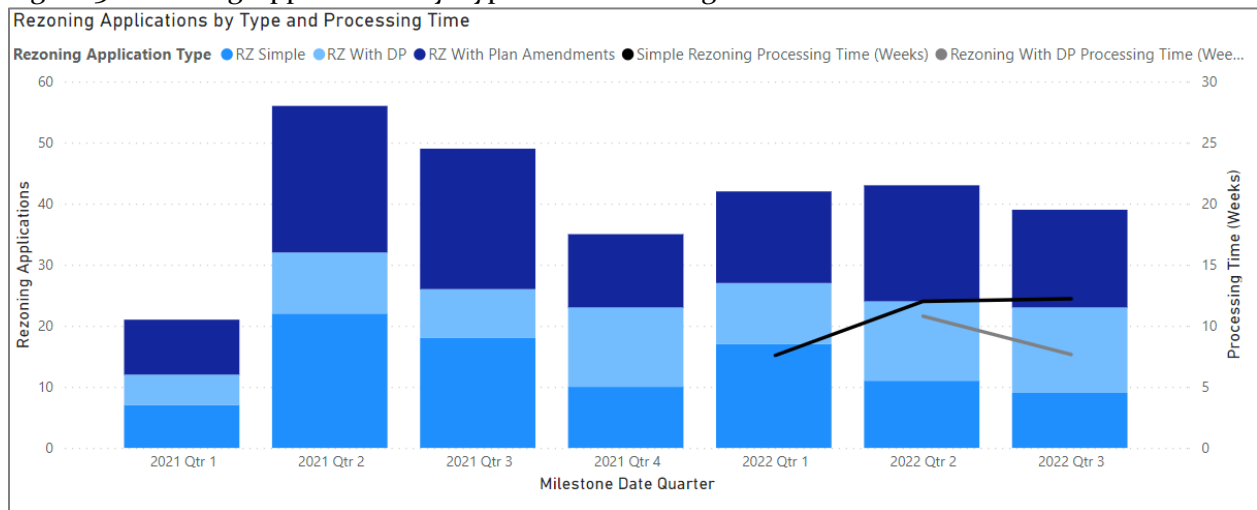
Rezoning with Development Permit

The City received 14 Rezoning Applications with DP in Q3 2022. Year-to-date, the City has received 37 applications, which is 3% higher than the number of applications received last year.

In Q3 2022, the City processed nine Rezoning Applications with DP, with a processing time of 7.6 weeks. Staff expect the processing time of Rezoning Applications with DP to gradually increase closer to the 16-week target, reflecting the complexity of applications being processed.

The current processing time for a Rezoning Application with DP is 10.6 weeks, based on applications processed in the last 90 days.

Figure 3: Rezoning Applications by Type and Processing Time



One-Year Overview of the Introduction of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines

The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines program was established one year ago and has had a significant beneficial impact on the permitting experience, as demonstrated in the processing timeline acceleration in most permitting categories, including reducing the Single-Family Building Permit timelines by 51%, moving from 15.6 weeks in Q3 2021 to 7.7 weeks in Q3 2022. These improvements were introduced in the context of sustained application volume and ongoing demand for land development services across all permitting types.

The City is now better equipped to monitor permitting processing times and take action, if required, to maintain service levels. Staff have greater insights into permitting timelines, with improved tracking abilities. Applicants have transparency to the current permitting timelines through a dedicated webpage, with weekly updates to the processing times, information about the processing milestones, and key measurement points and information to maximize applicant success, focusing on key deficiencies: <https://www.surrey.ca/renovating-building-development/guaranteed-permitting-timelines>.

This innovative program has been well received by the development community. On November 17, 2022, the City received the Most Improved Approval Timing award from NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, Vancouver Chapter. Receiving such an award further validates the strategic value and positive impact that the Guarantee Permitting Timelines Program has on the land development industry and community access to housing.

Process Improvement Progress Report

The City continues to leverage continuous improvement initiatives to accelerate the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines. The following are highlights of recent process improvement milestones.

Building Permit Process Enhancement Study

Earlier this year, the City hired a consultant to perform a comprehensive analysis of the Building Permit review process, seeking to identify improvement opportunities. Through this review, with comprehensive engagement of industry stakeholders, the City seeks to better understand the current review process, industry leading practices and identify improvement opportunities, balancing processing improvement with the City's responsibilities as regulator and auditor of development.

The consultant's final report is expected to be received before the end of the year. Staff will review the report's content and recommendations, seeking to introduce improvement opportunities as part of the 2023 workplan and long-term improvement roadmap.

Digital Permitting Portal

On October 17, 2022, the City launched the second release of the trade permit portal, providing significant updates to the Electrical Permit Portal. Following the successful launch of the Plumbing Permit Portal on June 9, 2022, the Electrical Permit Portal release provides a significant user experience improvement, simplified workflows, improved field validation, and consolidated login using a MySurrey Account.

Online permitting is significantly more efficient than applying through paper, reducing the number of incomplete applications, reducing duplication of efforts, improving transparency, and accelerating the permitting process.

In launching the trade permit portal releases, the volume of permits submitted online remained above 92%, with additional growth anticipated through additional contractor outreach and continued enablement of online permitting capabilities.

In Q3 2022, staff began working on enhancing the online inspection request process, seeking to provide contractors with enhance visibility to any outstanding inspection requirement. The improved online inspection request portal is expected to launch in early 2023.

This work is part of the City's Digital Permitting Expansion Project, seeking to improve and accelerate the development approval process in Surrey by expanding online services available to clients and delivering enhanced communication and transparency, increased access, reduced costs, and improved quality of submissions.

Additional phased releases are planned for 2023 and beyond, including new online permitting capabilities in Area Planning, Building Permits, and Engineering Permits, seeking to provide applicants with continued improved visibility to their application processing status.

Monitoring Staffing Resources

Recruitment and development of staff remains a priority for sustainable service delivery, with the competitive job market impacting staffing levels and recruitment efforts.

Staff anticipate requiring more resources to sustain the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines and are actively reviewing staffing complements, based on the types, volume and complexity of applications, with new staffing requests anticipated to be brought forward through the 2023 budget process.

Extended Hours Pilot Program

The Extended Hours Pilot (the "Pilot") Program was launched on March 31, 2022, supported by a significant communication plan, including a memo to Council, updates to the City website, press release, posters and ongoing promotion on social media. This six-month Pilot was intended to provide citizens with increased awareness and access to key City Hall services, the First Floor Property & Payment Services Counter, and the Second Floor Planning & Development Front Counter, on a drop-in basis, from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. every week on Thursday, as summarized below:

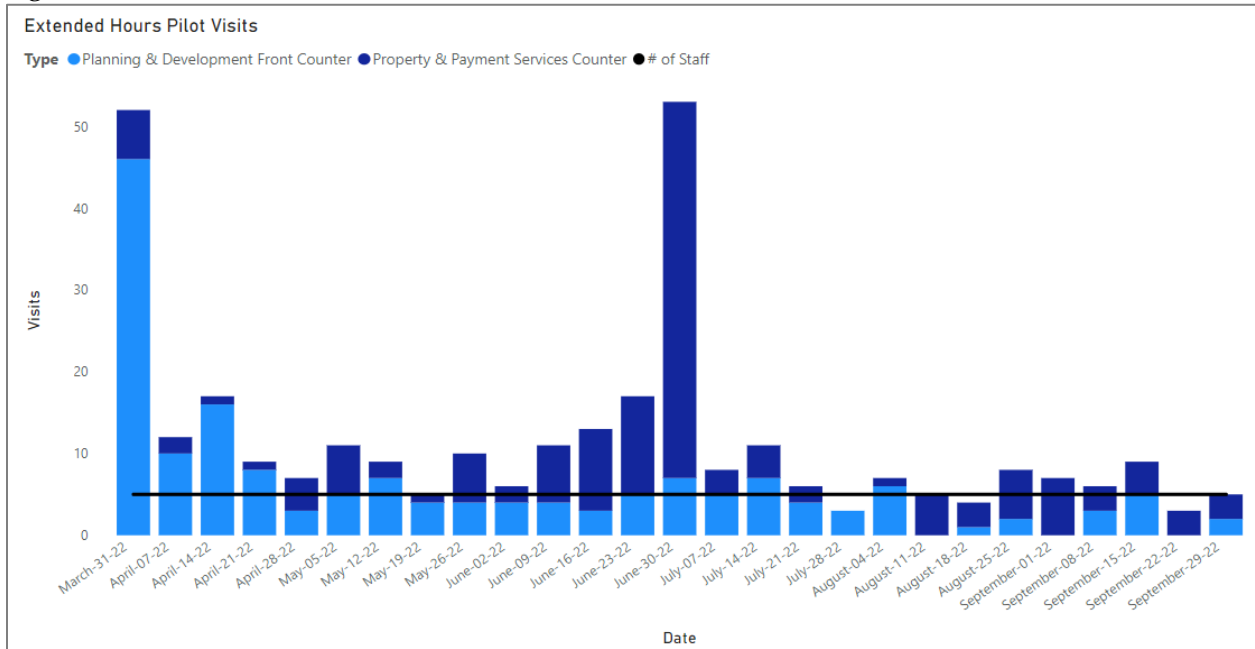
Drop-In City Hall Services offered during the Pilot

Property & Payment Services Counter	Planning & Development Front Counter
Payment services for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Property Tax- Utility Bills- Dog Licenses- Parking Tickets- False Alarm Payments- Business Licence Payments- Building Permits Property & Payment Services account routine enquiries Building packages pick up	Permit application intake support, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Permit application requirements and drop offs- Basic zoning enquiries- Overview of relevant policies and procedures Basic file enquiries for instream applications Documents and drawings submissions Permit payments Request record searches Schedule follow up appointment

With a reduced staff complement scheduled after 4:30 p.m., not all services are suitable for extended hours delivery.

For the six-month Pilot period of March 31, 2022, to September 29, 2022, 314 interactions have been recorded, ranging from payments, permit applications, and enquiries. Most of these interactions relate to the initial launch of the Pilot and leading up to the June property tax payment deadline, as shown in Figure 4. The implementation of the Pilot was impacted by a misunderstanding of services offered, with many clients expecting full services, despite continued communication efforts to align expectations. After the June property tax payment deadline, the number of interactions decreased and on some evenings each staff person only had one or two interactions between 4:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Figure 4: Extended Hours Pilot Visit



A review of client interactions during the Pilot indicates that 43% of all interactions, an average of five visits per evening, are aligned with the Pilot services offered, leaving the majority of clients visiting requiring next day follow up. The Property & Payment Services Counter interactions are on average 93% aligned with the drop-in services, as compared to the Planning & Development Front Counter, at only 23%, with most interactions relating to in-depth building permit enquiries. In the 23% of valid building permit interactions, most were related to plans and document drop-offs, not requiring any specific expertise, and available for electronic submission.

Since the April 11, 2022 full reopening of City Hall to the public following adjusted operations during the pandemic, staff have noticed a gradual increase of in-person engagements at the service counters during regular business hours, with the majority of clients continuing to use the enhanced remote services and digital engagement tools, including the ability for owners to pay for property taxes online through their financial institution and submit a building permit application digitally.

The Pilot generated significant learnings, including:

- The need for significant staffing complement to provide a wholesome transactional experience; and
- Continued demand of digital transaction and electronic submissions for anytime, anywhere service abilities.

Given the low volume of in-person visits relative to the overall service levels, high utilization of digital transactions and frequent non-alignment to the services offered, it is recommended that the Pilot end effective December 22, 2022. This will allow the City to focus staffing resources where needed most, providing comprehensive in-person services during the regular workday, with continued focus on augmenting digital access for extended service.

Next Steps

With the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines Program formalized, staff will continue to monitor processing times, acting when required and leveraging process improvements, client education, proactive reporting, and staffing resources.

In addition, staff are continuing to further streamline the permitting experience based on data and engagement with the land development industry including the roll out of guaranteed permitting timelines for additional permit types.

Staff will provide the next quarterly update to Council in April 2023.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The work of these projects supports the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this project relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Economic Prosperity and Livelihood, and Infrastructure. Specifically, this project supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO"):

- Innovation DO14: Surrey is the regions innovation hub, focusing on health and clean technologies, and creating significant local and regional economic impacts.
- Innovation DO16: Surrey's businesses are active participants in the community and create economic value in a way that generates value for society.
- All Infrastructure DO2: Infrastructure systems provide safe, reliable and affordable services.

CONCLUSION

Demand for development is high in Surrey and improvements in the City's development approval process have a significant positive impact on regional and provincial growth and overall community access to housing. The identified improvement initiatives with the establishment of Guaranteed Permitting Timelines benefit land development clients and staff and reinforces the City's commitment to smart development.

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Finance

RD/JT/RG/cc/ss

Appendix "I" Corporate Report No. R140; 2022



CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R140

COUNCIL DATE: July 11, 2022

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council

DATE: July 7, 2022

FROM: Acting General Manager, Planning &
Development
General Manager, Engineering

FILE: 6630-01

SUBJECT: Quarterly Update (Q2 2022) on the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development and Engineering Departments recommend that Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a quarterly update on the implementation of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines for Single-Family Building Permits, Tenant Improvement Building Permits, and Rezoning Applications, and the corresponding process improvements to support these timelines. This report provides information on the status of permit processing times, formalizes the launch of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines, and provides an update on improvement initiatives currently in process for the successful implementation of this program.

BACKGROUND

Continuous improvement is the foundation of the City's approach to enhancing customer service. Through feedback from the development industry to staff and Council, however, it was indicated that a dramatic shift in the service delivery ethos was necessary. To that end, Council approved on October 18, 2021 Corporate Report No. R203; 2021, attached as Appendix "I", endorsing staff to implement guaranteed processing times for Single-Family Building Permits, Tenant Improvement Building Permits, and rezoning applications.

The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines, seek to improve the speed and predictability in the land development approval process, thereby demonstrating the City's commitment to the development industry and to improving access to housing and affordability in Surrey. The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines provide confidence that the City, working in partnership with land development applicants, is doing everything within its power to meet permit processing targets.

Since the introduction of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines on October 18, 2021, staff have progressively implemented the necessary tools to meet Council’s direction. Through a series of Corporate Reports (Corporate Report No. Ro26; 2022 attached as Appendix “II” and Corporate Report No. Ro88; 2022 attached as Appendix “III”), staff have clarified the approval process and permit processing time calculations, developed key performance indicators, and initiated process improvements to enhance capacity to meet the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines.

DISCUSSION

Staff have made significant progress in delivering the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines. Monitoring reports have been implemented for all in-scope permit types, to provide managers and staff with insights into the processing time of applications. Timelines are summarized in the following table.

Permit Type	Established Guarantee Targets	Current Processing Time	Averaged Quarterly Processing Time		
		June 2022	Q2 2022	Q1 2022	Q4 2021
Single-Family	10 weeks	8.4 weeks Below Target	9.0 weeks Below Target	9.4 weeks Below Target	14.6 weeks Above Target
Tenant Improvements	10 weeks	11.0 weeks Above Target	9.4 weeks Below Target	8.0 weeks Below Target	7.0 weeks Below Target
Rezoning, Single-Family	12 weeks	11.0 weeks Below Target	11 weeks Below Target	8.6 weeks Below Target	Not enough data
Rezoning, Multi-Family, Commercial, Industrial (excluding plan amendments)	16 weeks*	9.8 weeks Below Target	9.8 weeks Below Target	Not enough data	Not enough data
Site Servicing Reviews (related to Servicing Agreements)	2.5 weeks	2.5 weeks At Target	2.4 weeks Below Target	2.4 weeks Below Target	2.9 weeks Above Target

*Add 4 weeks for projects requiring Advisory Design Panel review

Single-Family Building Permits Processing Times

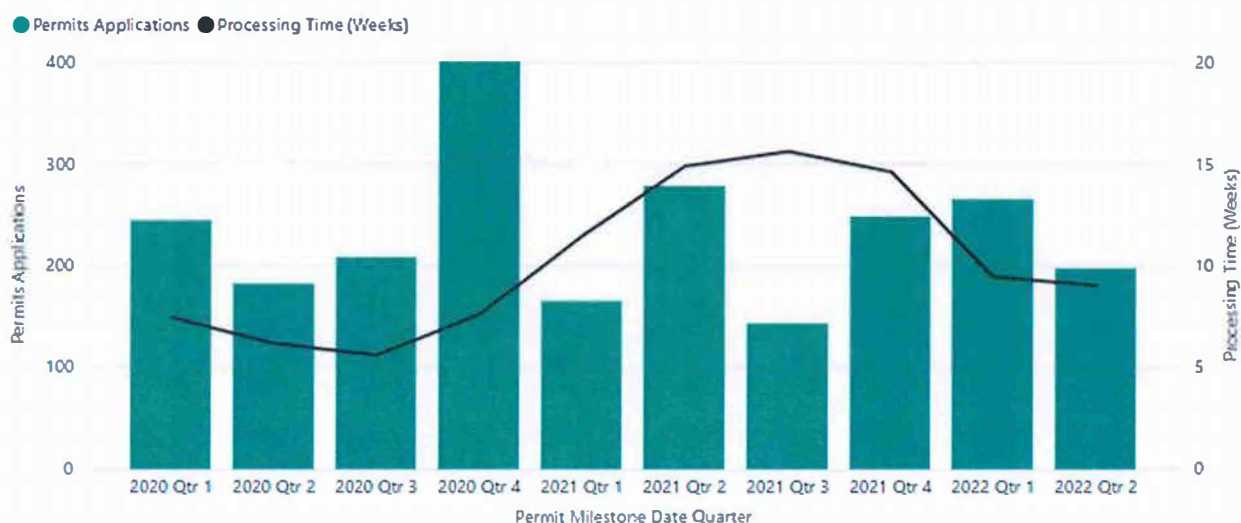
Annually, the City receives an average of 931 new Single-Family Building Permit applications.

The City received 197 new Single-Family Building Permit applications in Q2 2022, which is 29% lower than the number of applications received in the same quarter last year. Year to date, the City has received 4.2% more applications than last year.

In Q2 2022, applications were processed with an average processing time of 9.0 weeks. This represents a 4.2% reduction in processing time as compared to Q1 2022.

The current average processing time for a Single-Family Building Permit is 8.4 weeks, based on the processing time in the last 30 days.

Single Family Permit Applications and Processing Time



Tenant Improvement Building Permits Processing Times

Annually, the City receives an average of 595 Tenant Improvement Building Permit applications.

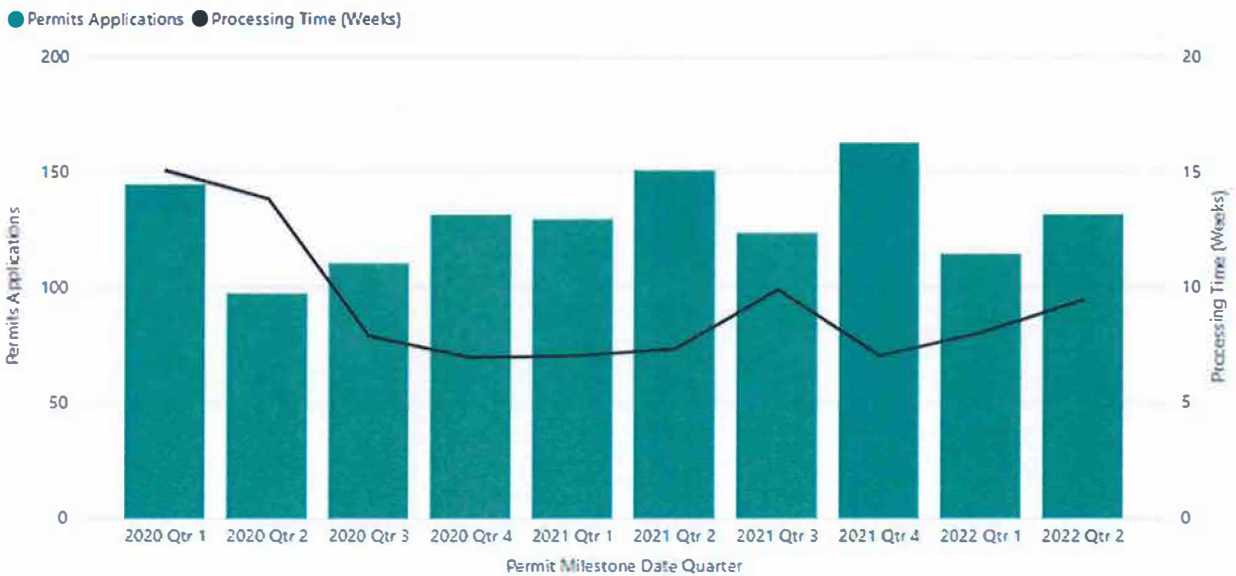
The City received 131 Tenant Improvement Building Permit applications in Q2 2022, which is 12.6% lower than the number of applications received in the same quarter last year. Year to date, the number of new applications is 12% lower than last year.

In Q2 2022, complete applications were processed an average processing time of 9.4 weeks. This represents a 17.5% increase in processing time as compared to Q1 2022, but still below the established target guarantee of 10 weeks.

The current average processing time processing time for a Tenant Improvement Building Permit is 11.0 weeks, based on the processing time in the last 30 days. New staff have been added and existing staff have been reassigned to assist in processing complex permits, adding to the Tenant Improvement Permits processing capacity. Several additional positions are in active recruitment to fill vacancies. These changes are expected to help the City meet the permit process targets.

Staff will continue to monitor the current processing time and volume of applications, and will make further adjustments as needed to maintain service levels across all permit types.

Tenant Improvements Building Permit Applications and Processing Time



Rezoning

Annually, the City receives an average of 120 new rezoning applications, including simple rezoning, rezoning with Development Permit (“DP”), and rezoning with DP and Plan Amendments. Over 44% of rezoning applications contain plan amendments and are not part of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines program due to the applications being inconsistent with City plans, which may lead to longer processing times, resubmissions, and potential denials, as outlined in Corporate Report No. R203; 2021.

Simple Rezoning

In Q2 2022, the City received 12 Simple Rezoning applications (rezoning applications with no corresponding DP). Year to date, the City has received 30 Simple Rezoning applications, which is equal to the number of applications received last year.

In Q2 2022, the City processed nine Simple Rezoning applications with an average processing time of 11.0 weeks.

The current average processing time for Simple Rezoning applications is 11.0 weeks, based on applications processed in the last 90 days.

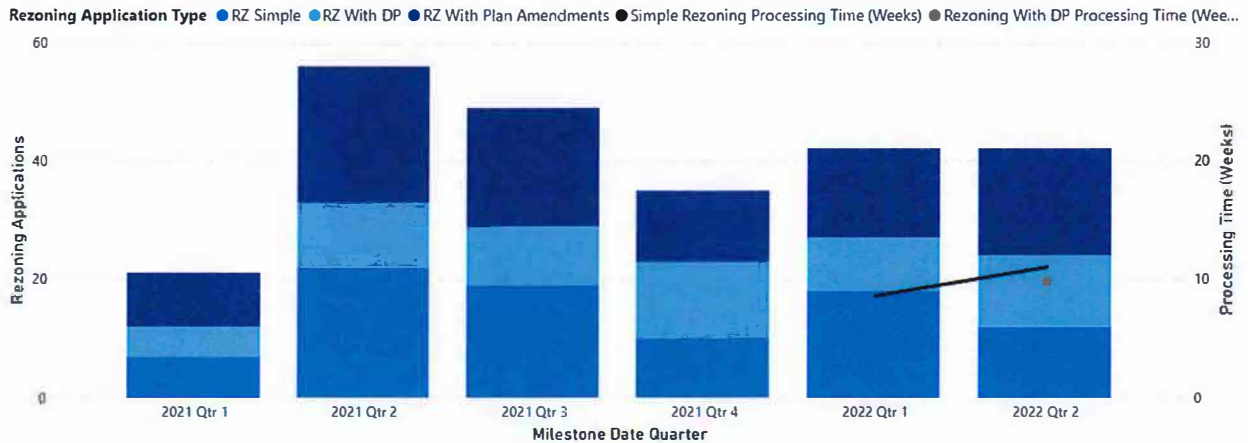
Rezoning with Development Permit

The City received 12 Rezoning Applications with DP in Q2 2022. Year to date, the City has received 21 applications, which is 31% higher than the number of applications received last year.

In Q2 2022, the City processed eight Rezoning Applications with DP with an average processing time of 9.8 weeks. Staff expect the processing time of Rezoning Applications with DP to gradually increase closer to the 16-week target, reflecting the complexity of applications being processed.

The current average processing time for a Rezoning Application with DP is 9.8 weeks, based on applications processed in the last 90 days.

Rezoning Applications by Type and Processing Time



Guaranteed Permit Timelines Formalization

This innovative partnership program provides applicants and the City significant improvements for ongoing, shared, success. The effectiveness of this program is bearing fruits, with data showing that the City is meeting targeted timelines across most permitting categories.

The City is now better equipped to monitor permitting processing times and take action, if required, to maintain service levels. In implementing the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines, the City has leveraged several key strategic areas, including:

- Reviewing staffing levels;
- Improving transparency and reporting;
- Initiating process improvements; and
- Improving applicant experience and education.

Key Considerations for Shared Success

Processing times are focused on deliverables within the City's control, acting diligently to monitor compliance with regulations, including the Building Code and Bylaws, seeking to provide land development applicants with increased predictability for complete submissions.

The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines do not provide fixed-time permit issuance. To achieve success, the applicant and City staff must work in partnership, towards a common goal, with defined roles and responsibilities.

Each application is unique and may experience some variability in the processing time, based on the completeness and accuracy of the submissions and the experience of the applicant. Incomplete applications, including missing required documentation, incompatibility with zoning requirements, and plan deficiencies, may not align with the processing time and the time to issue a permit. The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines cannot be achieved when applicants are unresponsive or unwilling to work with staff to resolve deficiencies on applications.

Website Launch

To formalize the launch of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines, on July 12, 2022, the City website will be enhanced with new content pertaining to the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines. Through this comprehensive, publicly available information, the City seeks to further inform new and prospective land development applicants of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines, including weekly updates to the processing times, information about the processing milestones, and key measurement points and information to maximize applicant success, focusing on key deficiencies.

Informed by industry, applicant feedback and data, web content will undergo regular updates to remain fresh and responsive to emerging needs. The launch of the website will be accompanied by significant external communication efforts, including social media, press releases and e-news.

Staff are also developing additional communication materials, including letters to applicants, informing them of key milestones into their review process, seeking to address common misconceptions about the program, its scope and when the guarantee starts or ends.

Process Improvement Progress Report

The following are highlights of the process improvements with delivered or initiated in Q2 2022 to sustain and accelerate the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines.

Improved Application Checklist

On May 9, 2022, staff launched an updated application checklist for Single-Family Building Permits, with great success. Applicants benefit from increased clarity to the requirements for accurate and fulsome applications.

Staff plan on leveraging the learning from the updated Single-Family Building Permit Checklist in other areas, starting with Rezoning applications. These improvements will assist clients increase the rate of compliant applications, helping focus staff efforts toward permit processing.

Improved Status Update Communication with Applicant

In Q1 2022, staff began piloting an automated notification to Single-Family Building Permit applicants four weeks from the anticipated processing time completion. This timeline status update will help decrease inquiries and assist with the scheduling of trades.

Staff are investigating increasing the frequency of automated status updates and adding other status updates to provide additional comfort that the application is processing and has not been "lost in the system".

Digital Permitting Portal

On June 9, 2022, the City launched the first phase of the trade permit portal enhancements, providing a significant update to the Plumbing Permit Portal. This release provides a significant user experience improvement, simplified workflows, and consolidated login using a MySurrey Account.

This initial release is part of the City's Digital Permitting Expansion Project seeking to improve and accelerate the development approval process in Surrey by expanding online services available to clients and delivering enhanced communication and transparency, increased access, reduced costs, and improved quality of submissions.

Additional phased releases are planned for 2022 and beyond, including updates to the Electrical Permit Portal and new online permitting capabilities in Area Planning, Building Permits and Engineering Permits, seeking to provide applicants with improved visibility to their application processing status.

Expanded Hours Pilot Program

On Thursday March 31, 2022, the First Floor Property & Payment Services Counter and the Second Floor Planning & Development Front Counter at City Hall began offering select services, on a drop-in basis, one day per week, from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This six-month pilot seeks to further support citizens' sense of belonging and economic opportunities, with increased awareness and access to key City services, including permit application drop-offs, zoning enquiries and information on relevant policies and procedures.

Monitoring Staffing Resources

Recruitment for positions approved earlier this year continues. Several positions are now filled and contributing to the permit processing efforts. The competitive job market is impacting the recruitment timelines.

Staff anticipate requiring more resources to sustain the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines and are actively reviewing staffing complements, based on the types, volume and complexity of applications, with new staffing requests anticipated to be brought forward through the 2023 budget process.

Next Steps

With the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines formalized, staff will continue to monitor processing times, taking action when required and leveraging process improvements, client education, proactive reporting, and staffing resources to continue meeting the processing times, with continued quarterly updates to Council.

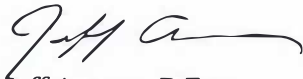
SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The work of these projects supports the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this project relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Economic Prosperity and Livelihood, and Infrastructure. Specifically, this project supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO"):

- Innovation DO14: Surrey is the regions innovation hub, focusing on health and clean technologies, and creating significant local and regional economic impacts;
- Innovation DO16: Surrey's businesses are active participants in the community and create economic value in a way that generates value for society; and
- All Infrastructure DO2: Infrastructure systems provide safe, reliable and affordable services

CONCLUSION

Demand for development is high in Surrey and improvements in the City's development approval process have a significant positive impact on regional and Provincial growth and overall community access to housing. The identified improvement initiatives with the establishment of Guaranteed Permitting Timelines benefit land development clients and staff. Progress made to date on this initiative and other Continuous Improvement Projects reinforces the City's commitment to smart development.



Jeff Arason, P.Eng.

Acting General Manager,
Planning & Development

RD/JT/RG/cc

Appendix "I" - Corporate Report No. R203; 2021
Appendix "II" - Corporate Report No. R026; 2022
Appendix "III" - Corporate Report No. R088; 2022

***Appendices Available Upon Request**



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