

Present:

Councillor Nagra, Chair
Councillor Patton, Vice-Chair
Councillor Guerra
Ted Dawson
Charan Sethi

Agency Representative:

Jeff Fisher, Urban Development Institute (UDI)

Regrets:

Nathan Hildebrand
Diana Dilworth, Homebuilders Association
Vancouver (HAVAN)
Jay Chadha, Homebuilders Association Vancouver
(HAVAN)

Staff Present:

J. Arason, Acting General Manager, Planning
and Development
R. Dube, Manager, Building Division
S. Lau, Manager, Land Development
J. Thibaudeau, Manager, Business
Transformation
P. Zevit, Biodiversity Conservation Planner
L. Blake, Administrative Assistant

A. ADOPTIONS**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was Moved by Councillor Guerra
Seconded by Councillor Patton
That the Development Advisory Committee
meeting agenda of May 10, 2022, be adopted.
Carried

2. Adoption of the April 5, 2022 Meeting Minutes

It was Moved by Councillor Guerra
Seconded by Councillor Patton
That the minutes of the Development
Advisory Committee meeting held April 5, 2022, be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Pamela Zevit, Biodiversity Conservation Planner
City of Surrey**

Pamela Zevit, Biodiversity Conservation Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Biodiversity Design Guidelines (BDG) and highlighted the following information:

- The BDG are part of a progression in nature-based approaches in Surrey that demonstrate the City's commitment to biodiversity. The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) was implemented in 2014 to identify biodiversity within the city and develop a management strategy to maintain it. The BDG were completed in 2021 to support the implementation of the BCS by integrating biodiversity-based design approaches and best practices that are Surrey-specific and consider the City's environmental, social and political context. The BDG also consider regional connectivity that influence the long-term status of the City's Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) and other natural assets shared with neighbouring cities.

- The BDG have numerous linkages at the operational and policy level so they can be implemented in a collaborative fashion. The Guidelines are intended to help guide land use planning and development activities across the City, focusing on site-level mechanisms to deliver objectives at the microcosm level.
- The BDG are organized into eight modules: habitat structure, light noise, road ecology, drainage, green roofs and walls, maintained landscapes, trails and signage. Each module includes design actions with BCS linkages and co-benefits and design, maintenance and monitoring information. The BDG are intended for use across the city's landscape, with an initial focus on City lands. Projects that have been identified for application of the BDG include Edgewood Park, Bear Creek Athletics Centre and Nicomekl Riverfront Park. Staff will meet with the development community to discuss the application of the BDG in private developments.
- Staff have identified a suite of plant and wildlife species that will benefit from the BDG. The 26 main indicator species will help measure how well the BDG are being implemented based on their movement and health. The Biodiversity Checklist is an additional tool in the BDG and is one of the recommended deliverables from the BCS.
- It is anticipated that the BDG will be transformed into an interactive online tool for staff and the public. An example of an interactive online tool is London's Rewild My Street program that provides design-led guidance for residents who want to adapt their homes, gardens and streets to encourage wildlife.
- Staff have been working across City departments to integrate the BDG into different activities. Staff have been in discussion on the direction for long-term implementation and comments are being compiled into a future summary.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Zevit provided the following information:

- The BDG are incorporated into a number of NCP and it is anticipated to be incorporated into the Design Construction Manual and Design Standard Drawings. The City also highlights projects that voluntarily incorporate the BDG.
- In general, the Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Guidelines have some flexibility. The Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) width and location was completed after much community engagement. The City does not want to duly encumber land use during the redevelopment process, but some areas may be identified in an NCP as future parkland that would be acquired through the City's acquisition process. There is also a new DCC that is specific to the GIN.
- The BDG and GIN are being reflected in the Stage 2 revisions to the South Campbell Heights Plan.

C. Sethi joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Quarterly Update on the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines and Next Steps

Jerome Thibaudeau, Manager, Business Transformation, provided the following report regarding the quarterly update on the guaranteed permitting timelines and next steps:

- The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines initiative was introduced through at the October 18, 2021, Regular Council – Public Hearing meeting and seeks to improve speed and predictability in the land approval process, improve access to housing and affordability and demonstrate the City's support for the development community.
- The guarantee is a partnership relationship. The City's role is to provide predictable processing times for City-driven deliverables and further empowers the City to take actions. The applicant benefits from clarified role and responsibilities and their requirements for a successful application. Providing a complete submission is the best way to improve processing times, as deficiencies take longer to process. Staff continue to support applicants to improve the quality of their application.
- Since the introduction of the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines, staff have made significant progress to meet the established Processing Times for Single Family Building permits, Tenant Improvements, and Rezoning, while monitoring Site Servicing Reviews (Servicing Agreements). At the end of Q1 2022, all Processing Times are below the established targets, with the exception of Tenant Improvement Building permits, slightly above the 10 weeks target and staff are working towards meeting the established guaranteed target.
- The City receives an average of 931 Single Family Building Permits per year and meets the 10-week processing timeline 87% of the time, averaging 9.4 weeks to process a complete application
- The City receives an average of just under 600 Tenant Improvement Building Permits per year. Most challenges with Tenant Improvement Building Permits are related to complications with the anticipated use, historical non-compliant work within the space or the base building being unable to accommodate the propose use. Staff meet the processing timeline target 68% of the time, with an average of 8 weeks.
- The City receives an average about 120 new Rezoning applications per year. Applications requiring plan amendments are not included in the scope of the guarantee. The processing times does not include addressing major deficiencies nor finalization of the application. While staff meet the processing timeline 90% of the time for simple rezoning applications, more time is needed for rezoning applications with development permits.

- There are four areas that the City is focusing on to implement and continue to meet processing timelines:
 - Staffing resources: seven new positions have been created to address volume. Four positions have been hired and there are several positions in the recruitment process.
 - Improved transparency: there have been significant investment in technology to increase transparency and improve oversight, such as enhanced tracking ability to better understand where applications are in the approval process. Staff will review performance forecasting and leverage this information to focus resources where they are needed most.
 - Process improvement: an updated application requirement checklist has been developed and automated status updates emails have been implemented for applicants. Staff have hired KPMG to review the City's building approval process, outline best practices and leverage audit-based reviews. Staff continue to work on enhanced online and remote permitting abilities, as well as streamlining the PLA extension process. A revamped on-line trade permit portal is anticipated to be launched in June 2022.
 - Education: feedback from an online survey was incorporated into the improvement process. In general, there was satisfaction with the ease of submitting a new application, and a need for increased visibility for application status and outstanding deficiencies. An extended service hours at City Hall pilot was also well-received. The Guaranteed Permitting Timelines will be formally launched in June 2022.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Thibaudeau, Remi Dube, Building Division Manager and Jeff Arason, Acting General Manager, Planning & Development, provided the following information:

- There are no inherent efficiencies with respect to combining Planning & Development and Engineering departments. Efficiency is generally found when there is good interdepartmental communication to ensure referrals are completed quickly. Customers should not be aware that there could be multiple departments working on their application, as staff should be providing one composite answer from the City.
- There is currently a Single Family Building Permit checklist (see <https://www.surrey.ca/sites/default/files/media/documents/SingleFamilyDwellingBuildingPermitApplicationChecklist.pdf>) that is available online and staff will be seeking feedback from applicants to reduce incomplete applications.

- Staff have been engaging with tenant space developers for feedback on the Tenant Improvement (TI) Process and how the process can be streamlined. In general, more complicated applications, such as addressing non-permitted work, tend to slow the entire process down. A better system is needed to triage and assign those applications. A staff person to help with TI Permits is part of the staff hiring plan.
- Staff will bring forward the KMPG report for information, once the report has been finalized and reviewed by staff. A positive outcome of the Guaranteed Permit Timeline process is the increased use of technology and better access to permit information. This allows staff to monitor current permit process times in real-time.
- Data is currently not available with respect to processing timelines for other senior levels of government. These external referrals, outside of the permit timeline guarantee, can have a significant impact on the applicant's experience. Staff will be meeting with Provincial representatives to discuss how their timelines can be improved.

The Committee commended staff for their work on the Guaranteed Permitting Timelines and noted that it is an excellent goal to work towards. The following additional comments were provided:

- Staff should consider implementing guaranteed timelines for Sign Permits.
- Staff should seek constant feedback regarding "bottlenecks" or common application deficiencies in the permitting process. It was suggested that the top three deficiencies can be highlighted so applicants can proactively address them.
- There should be a separate application process for small renovations. With the rise in unpermitted construction, the City should be encouraging people to construct with the proper permits and expediting the process for smaller projects.

D. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

This section had no items to consider.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

This section had no items to consider.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

This section had no items to consider.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

This section had no items to consider.

H. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Comments on the Market

- There is a lot of contradictory information regarding the market in the media. Developments in City Centre and townhomes continue to sell well and there remains strong interest in condo developments throughout the city.
- Surrey is doing well bringing housing supply online; however, any measures to further support housing, such as helping businesses locate here, would be beneficial.
- There is major inflation in construction prices and prices will likely continue to increase. This could result in some difficult situations for developers who bought properties with tight margins.

2. Future Agenda Items

The Committee suggested the following future agenda items:

- Parking Requirements and Relaxations, particularly in City Centre; and
- Discussion regarding the Urban Containment Boundary and Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Development Advisory Committee is scheduled for June 7, 2022.

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was

meeting be adjourned.

Moved by Councillor Guerra
Seconded by Councillor Patton
That the Development Advisory Committee

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Nagra, Chair