

A wide-angle photograph of the Vancouver skyline at night, viewed from a wooden pier. The city lights are reflected in the water, and the sky is a deep blue. The foreground is a wooden deck made of light-colored planks.

## **Bi-Monthly City Council Update: Development and Permit Process Improvements**

**Vancouver City Council Meeting  
June 7, 2022  
RTS 14988**

# Agenda



1. Review of actions and outcomes over past year
2. Looking forward – ongoing improvement initiatives
3. Policy recommendations

## Mandate and progress to-date



**Goal:** Substantially reduce the existing backlog of permits and licenses for smaller scale projects by end of Q2 2022.

- Produce Data
- Provide Council with recommendations as to how to best modernize development application and permitting processes, **including quick start options**;
- Provide recommendations as to related user fee adjustments;
- Provide bi-monthly updates to Council; and
- Pursue funding opportunities.

## Previous Council updates & decisions



**6** Update Reports

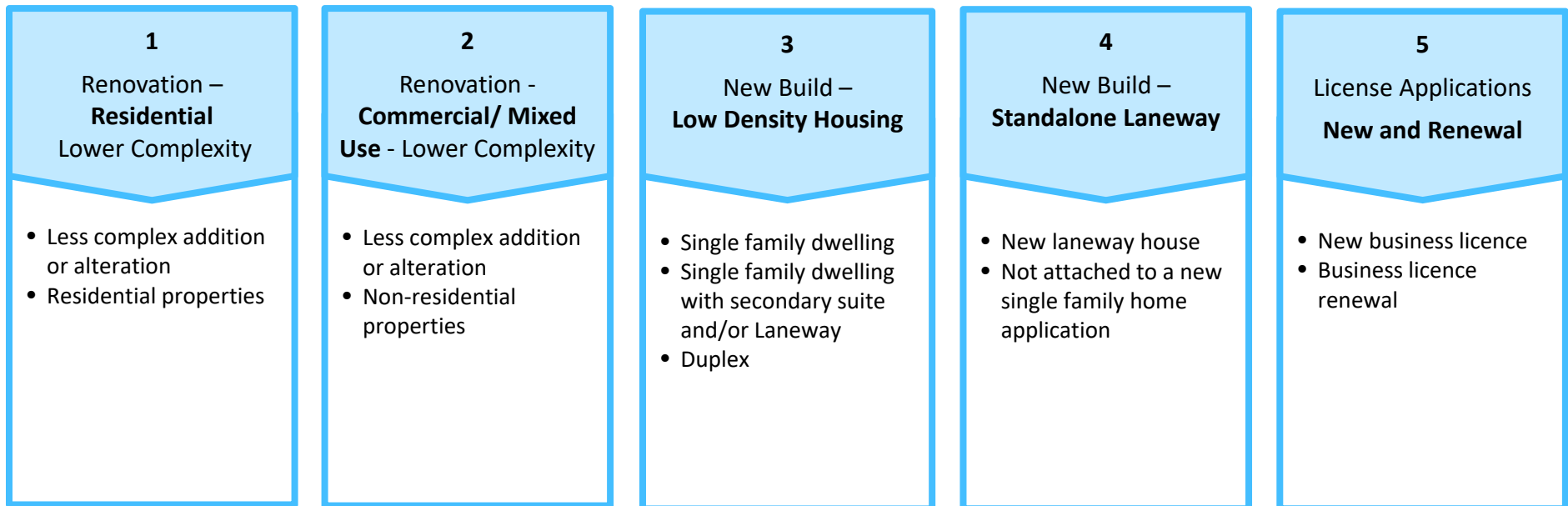
**2** Referrals to  
Public Hearing

**8** Approved Policy  
Changes

# Application types addressed by the Task Force



The Permitting Task Force focused its efforts on five application types



## Progress over the past 12 months



License application wait time

↓ 63%

Low-density new build permits issued (throughput)

↑ 23%

Low complexity renovations permits issued (throughput)

↑ 44%

Low-density new build applications (volume)

↑ 115%

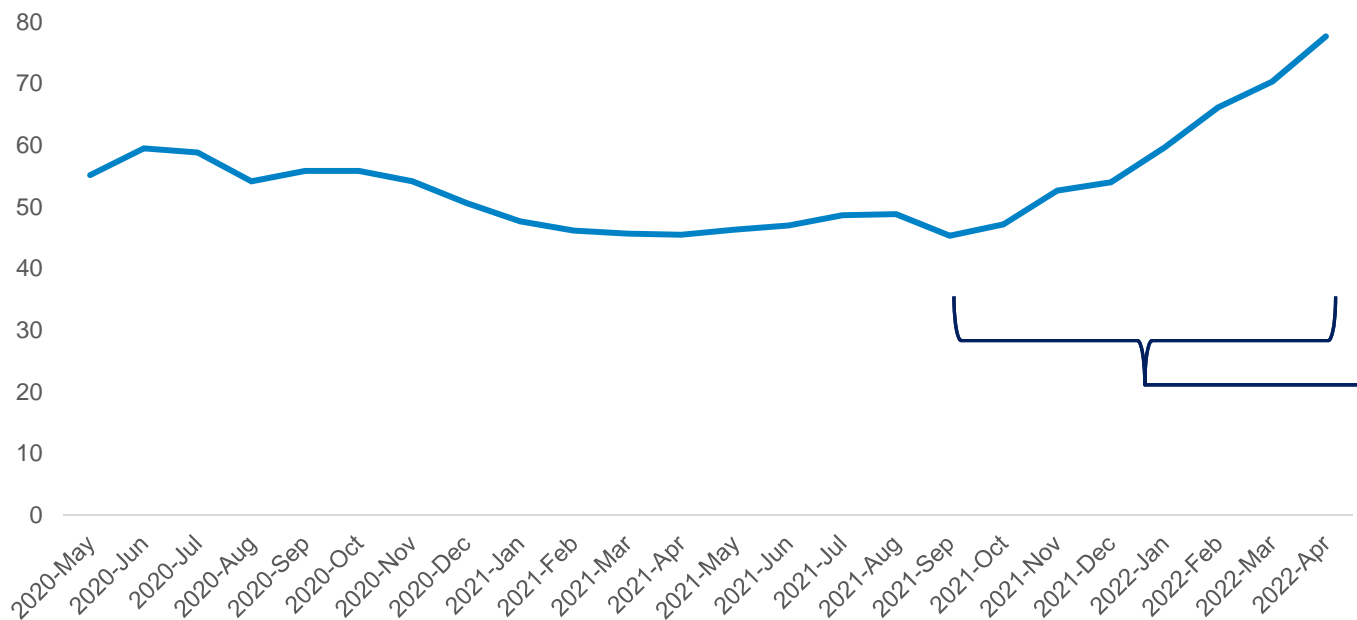
Low complexity renovations permit applications (volume)

↑ 25%

*Comparing May 2020-2021 to May 2021-2022*

# Increasing throughput in low density housing

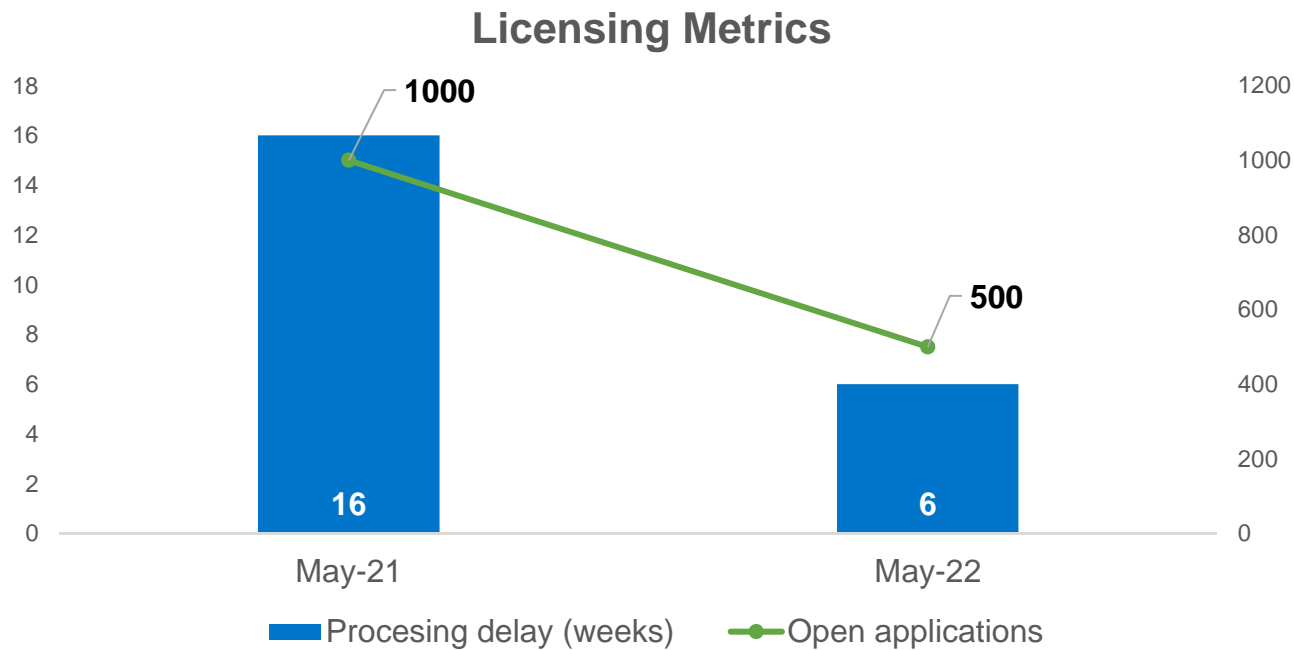
## New Build - Low Density Housing Permits issued



**71%**  
throughput  
increase

6 month moving average

# License applications



**63%**  
Wait time  
reduction

Progress largely driven by the additional staff, internal improvements to procedures and a new online payments system.





## Process Improvements to Date

# Industry engagement and partnerships




**5**  
Industry Segments consulted  
**Low-density  
Commercial  
Multi-unit residential  
Purpose built rental  
Renovators**

**25**  
Organizations represented



**5**  
Workshops conducted



**=**   
**70**  
Ideas generated

# Simplifying applications requirements

## **New energy data collection model**

- Saved 2 weeks processing time
- 3000 applications per year

## **Simplify site drawing submission requirements for certain renovations**

- Eliminated applications being rejected for site drawing deficiencies



# Rationalizing review process

## Risk based reviews for low-density applications

- 75% reduction in staff review time per application (30 minutes vs 2 hours)
- 2,500+ applications per year

## Relaxation of neighbourhood-specific design guidelines

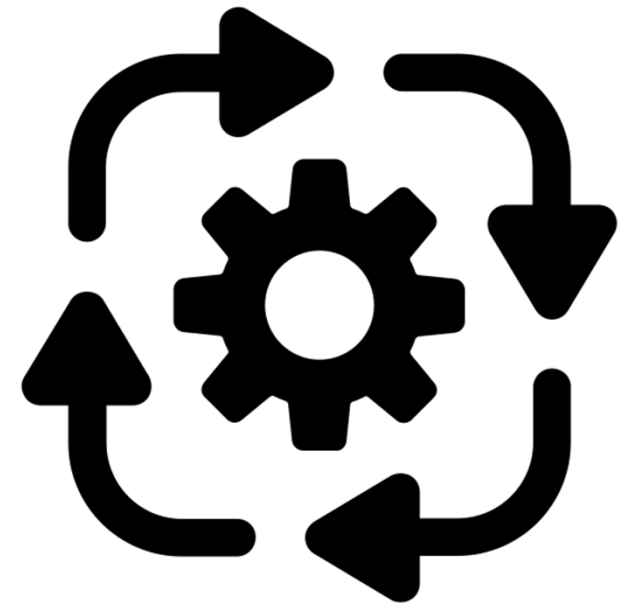
- 50% reduction in planning review time for some RS/RT applications
- 100% reduction in landscape review time

## Limit penalties for prior unpermitted work

- Staff now focusing only on the scope of work
- Faster and simpler reviews

## Combine application and plan review processes

- 2 weeks saved per application
- 2,500+ applications per year



# Reduced barriers for commercial renovations

## Change of use relaxations

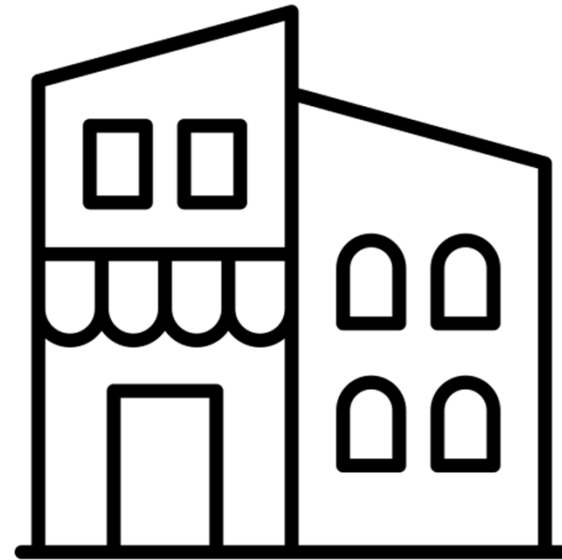
- Up to 16 weeks saved per application
- 150 applications per year

## Relaxation of demising wall upgrade

- Significantly faster processing time for a small number of applications

## Changing small suite definition from 60 to 100 occupants

- Eliminated upgrade requirements for a small volume of permits



# Improving customer service

## Confirming receipt of application

- Applicants contacted 15 ½ weeks sooner
- 2,500+ applications per year

## Services Centre operating model

- Customers can now book appointments
- Shifting model to a customer focused help centre

## Self service options

- Introduced ability to pay online, check application status online, and download permits electronically



# Dedicated processing streams

## Created stand-alone laneway stream to reduce queuing time

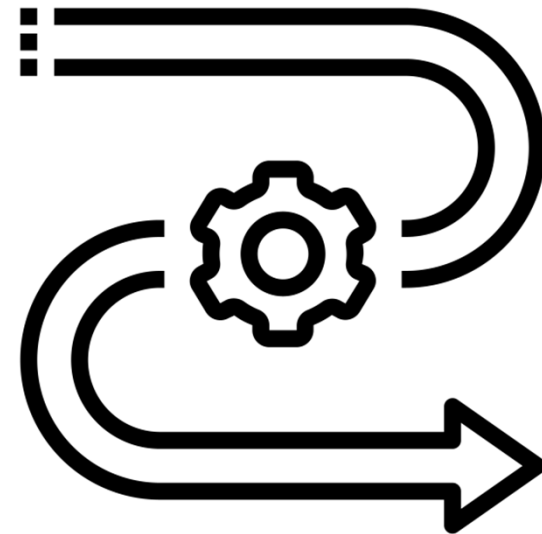
- Initiative receiving positive feedback
- Applicants now require more time after receiving initial feedback
- Assessing next steps

## Fast Track Process for Low Complexity Renovations (Direct to inspections process)

- Reduced processing time by more than 50%
- 200 applications per year
- Applicants can receive permit in as little as 2 weeks

## Fast track process to support new businesses

- Dedicated online application form and queue for qualified applicants
- Up to 16 weeks saved per application



# Staff resourcing

## Enable temporary overtime

- Significant impact on throughput in summer 2021
- 3,700 hours of total overtime

## Embedding landscape and tree reviews in DBL

- Embedded 2 landscape positions in DBL to improve efficiencies

## Licensing staff complement

- Adding new resources to increase licence processing capacity





# Regulatory reform

## Allow building permit for excavation and shoring prior to development permit

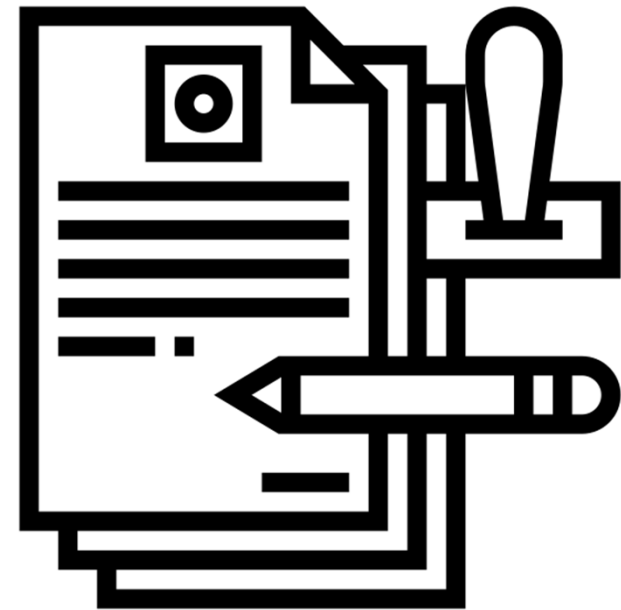
- Supported 2 Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot, 1 below-market housing project, 1 community centre
- 4 additional requests underway

## Temporary relaxation on the diameter of trees and requirements for arborist reports

- Positive impact to processing times
- Resulted in a loss of trees

## Updating Zoning & Development By-law

- Reformatted Zoning & Development By-law to simplify and make more customer friendly (July 2022)





# Metrics



**Application Trends:** timeframe of comparative analysis is May 2020-2021 and May 2021-2022

**Throughput:** # of permits issued over that same period

**Elapsed time:** date at which an application generates a permit number to when the permit was first issued.

**Application Types:**

- Low Density Housing
- Laneway Home
- Commercial Renovation
- Residential Renovations

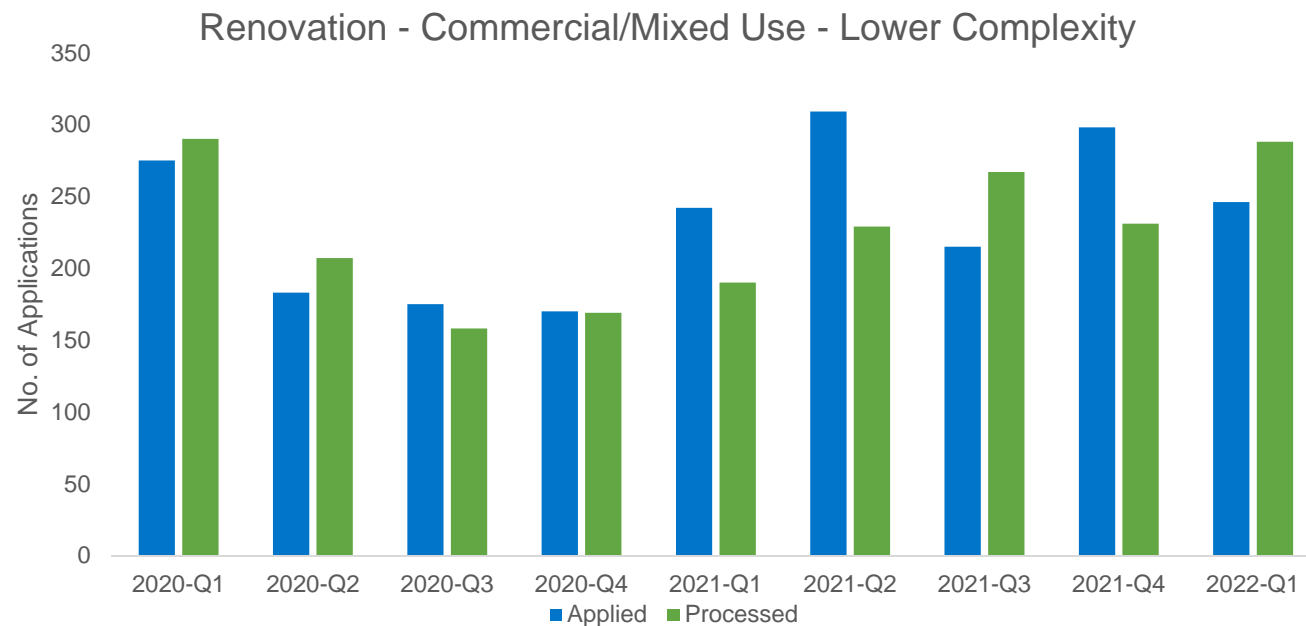
# 1. Residential Renovations



**25%**  
increase in  
application  
**43%**  
increase in  
throughput

May 20/21- 21/22

# 1. Commercial/Mixed Use Renovations

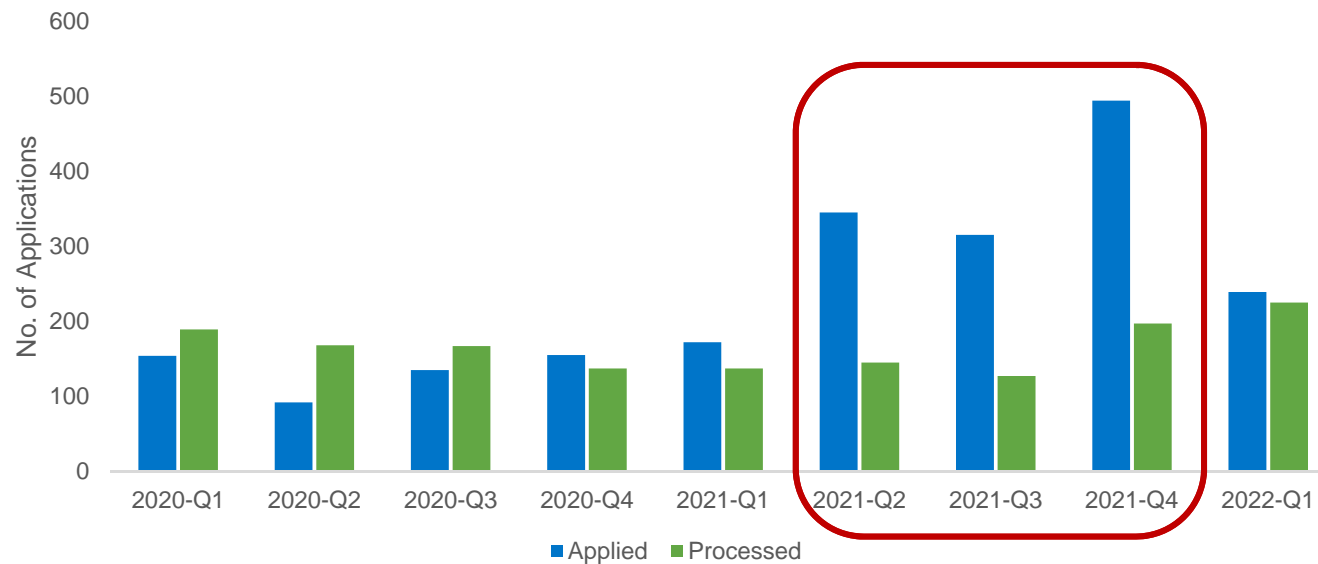


**24%**  
increase in  
application  
**45%**  
increase in  
throughput

May 20/21- 21/22

### 3. Low Density Housing

New Build - Low Density Housing

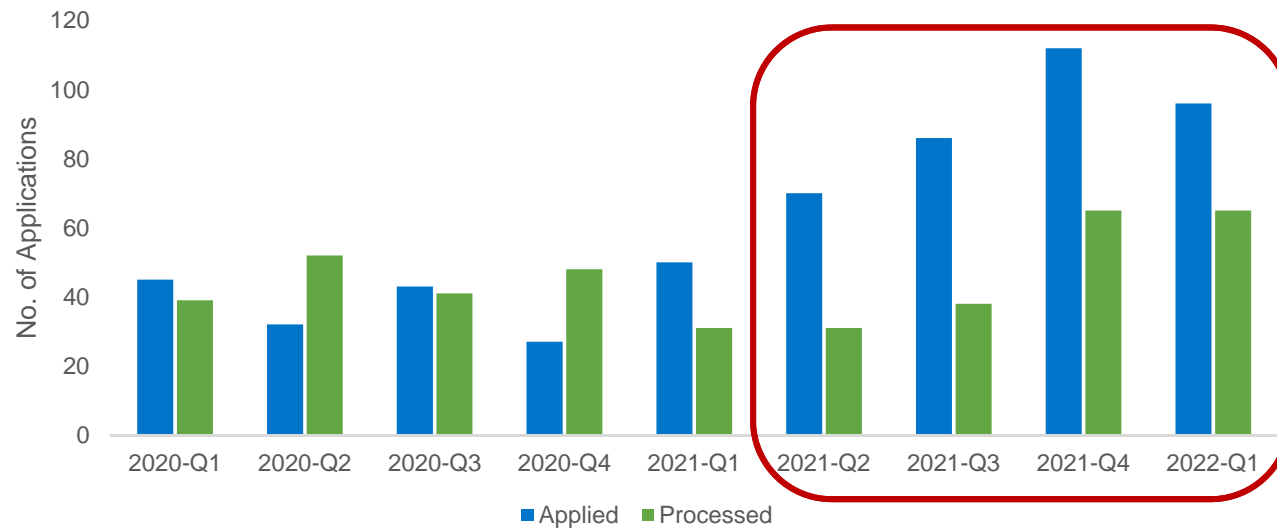


**116%**  
increase in  
application  
**23%**  
increase in  
throughput

May 20/21- 21/22

## 4. Laneway Home

New Build - Standalone Laneway



**120%**  
increase in  
application  
**22%**  
increase in  
throughput

May 20/21- 21/22

## Current processing times



*Median elapsed processing time (3 month weighted average)*

**New Build - Low Density Housing**

**32 ½**  
Weeks

**New Build - Standalone Laneway**

**28**  
Weeks

**Renovation –  
Commercial/Mixed Use - Lower Complexity**

**7**  
Weeks

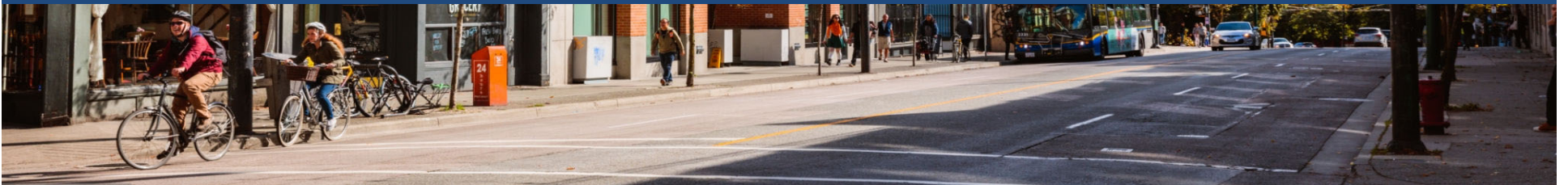
**Renovation - Residential - Lower Complexity**

**7**  
Weeks





## Looking Forward



## Key initiatives 2022-23



### **Integrated Program of Work**

1. Continue engagement with external stakeholders on development permit process improvements (complex projects)
2. Integrate risk based approaches into Development Permit (DP) reviews
3. Clarify authorities and use of discretion within the DP process
4. Increase throughput for Engineering reviews
5. Digitize rules and regulations, deploy a new customer portal, and expand open data portal
6. Continue evolution of service delivery model and role of Service Centre
7. Subject to approval of Broadway Plan, evaluate options to streamline processing of applications received under the Plan

# Evolving the Service Centre, shifting to digital first model



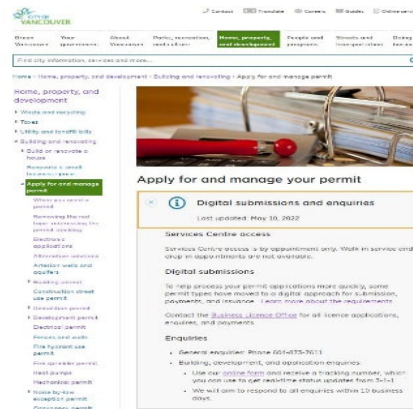
## Past

- 250+ tickets issued per day
- Long lines before opening
- Paper based processes
- No Service Level Agreements (SLAs)



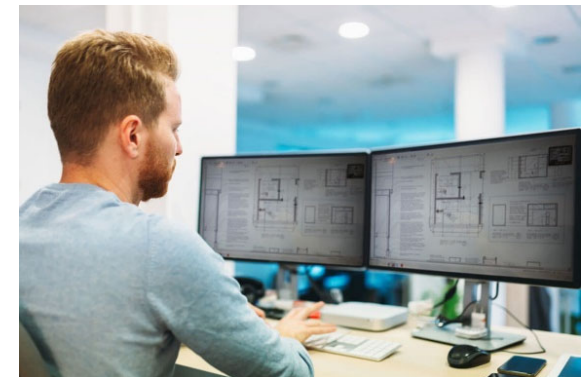
## Present

- Primarily digital
- Case management
- ~35 customers per day
- No lines
- Appointment booking available
- Customer survey for future state definition



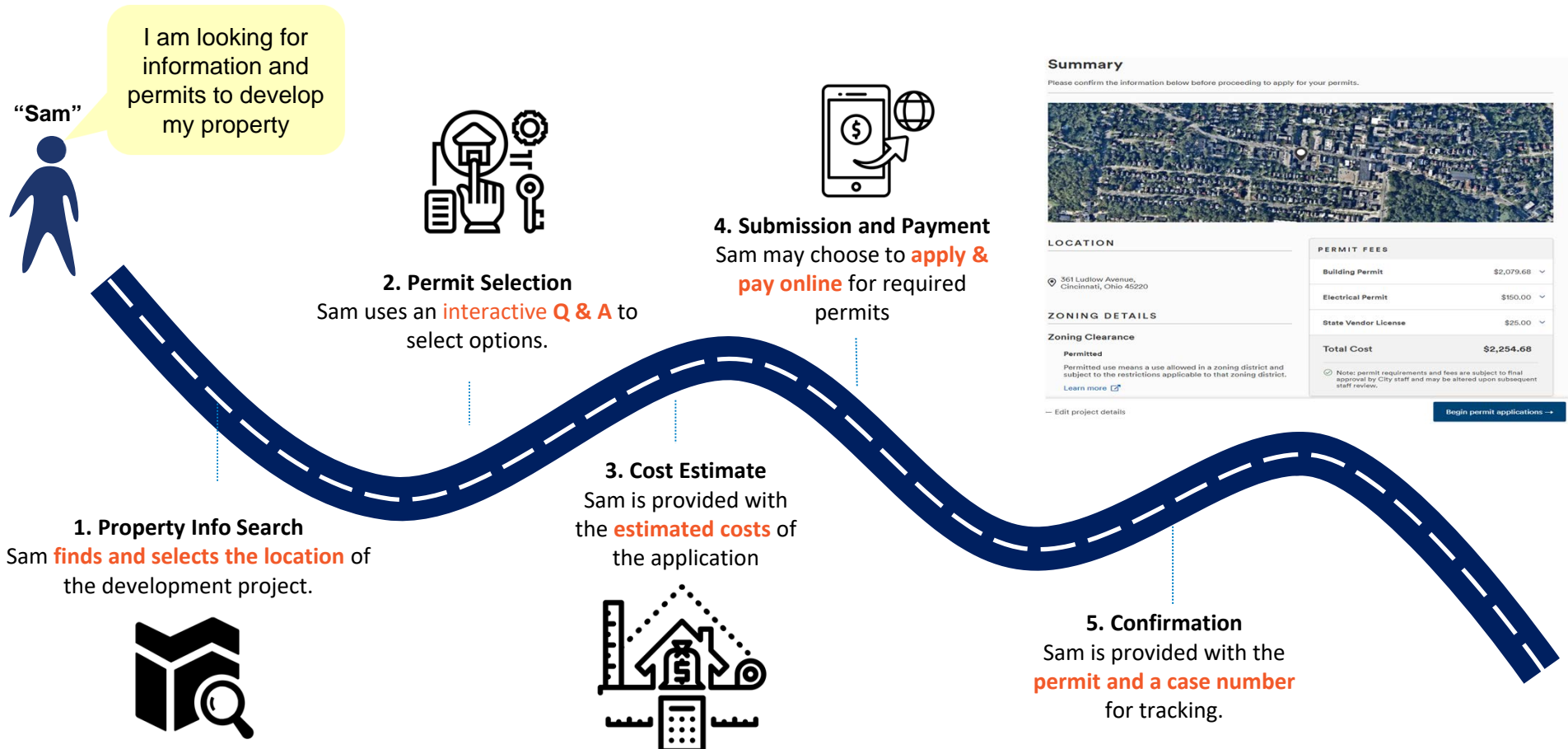
## Future

- Customer self serve
- Digital first approach
- Multi-channel





# Interactive Digital Development Application (IDDA)





## Policy Recommendations



## Summary of changes recommended by Staff



1. Extend non-enforcement of guidelines under the Zoning and Development By-law by reducing the number of conditions applied to permit applications for a period of 24 months.
2. Restore the Protection of Trees By-law maximum tree size permitted for removal without a permit to 20cm in diameter from 30 cm.
3. Extend non-enforcement of Protection of Trees By-law requirement for an Arborist Report until Dec. 31, 2023.
4. Expire non-enforcement of Protection of Trees By-law permit requirement for tree removal for development.