



Status Update – Permitting and Licensing Process Improvements, 3-3-3-1 Targets

Presented to Vancouver City Council
July 9, 2024



Purpose

Update on permit and licensing process improvements and progress on 3-3-3-1 targets, key achievements and work underway.

Four companion Council reports

REPORT	DEPARTMENT	COUNCIL DECISIONS	RTS
1. Status Update, Progress Toward 3-3-3-1 Permitting Targets	City Manager's Office	-	16329
2. Sprinkler Upgrade Exemption to Advance Progress Toward 3331 Permitting Targets	GM, Development, Buildings and Licensing	Approve changes to sprinkler upgrade trigger amount	16445
3. Regulatory Changes to Advance Progress Towards 3-3-3-1 Permitting Targets	GM, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability	Refer three proposed regulatory changes to public hearing	16444
4. Minor Policy Streamlining	GM, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability	Repeal/amend a set of policies	16437

To discuss today

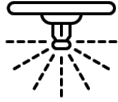


1. Key permitting achievements, last six months
2. Progress toward each 3-3-3-1 target
3. Key licensing achievements, last six months
4. Digital tools improving permitting
5. 3-3-3-1 Permitting Dashboard
6. Next steps

1.

Key permitting achievements, last six months

Key improvement highlights, last six months



1. Implemented Fast Track for eligible Sprinklers permits in January 2024, with more than 90% (730 since Jan.) of sprinkler permits now being issued within 24 hours of permit application.



2. Reduced requirements for traffic impact studies saving applicants \$10,000 per application and staff time by no longer needing to review the studies.



3. Higher sewer and water connection upgrade threshold means that 10% more home renovation permits are now eligible for processing in 3 days.



4. Eliminated requirement for street use permit/insurance for smaller home renovations making 10-15% more home renovation permits eligible for processing in 3 days.



5. Removed energy upgrade triggers for renovations under \$250,000 (effective Feb. 2025), making more home renovation permits eligible for processing in 3 days



6. Launched eComply pilot to automatically check applications for compliance with zoning regulations.

Some recent customer feedback ...

“Matra Construction completes on average 85 Tenant Improvement projects a year in the City of Vancouver. In our opinion, the City has transformed from being one of the worst jurisdictions to one of the best in terms of permit issuance speed.

This remarkable improvement has greatly reduced frustrations felt by contractors and architects, while benefiting local businesses and landlords. This significant improvement has enabled us to start projects much sooner, positively impacting our timelines and overall efficiency.”

– Arfan Khan, Partner, Matra Construction

“Now that permitting time is potentially fast-tracking, we may need to look at how we sequence our design process in order to make sure all these things dovetail smoothly so we’re moving as efficiently as possible, and our clients can have as short of a construction and design process as possible.”

– Darcy Hanna, & Daughters

“So far the sprinkler Fast Track program has been a positive addition to the sprinkler permitting system.”

– Admir Hajdarevic,
Northwest
Sprinkler
Company Ltd

2.

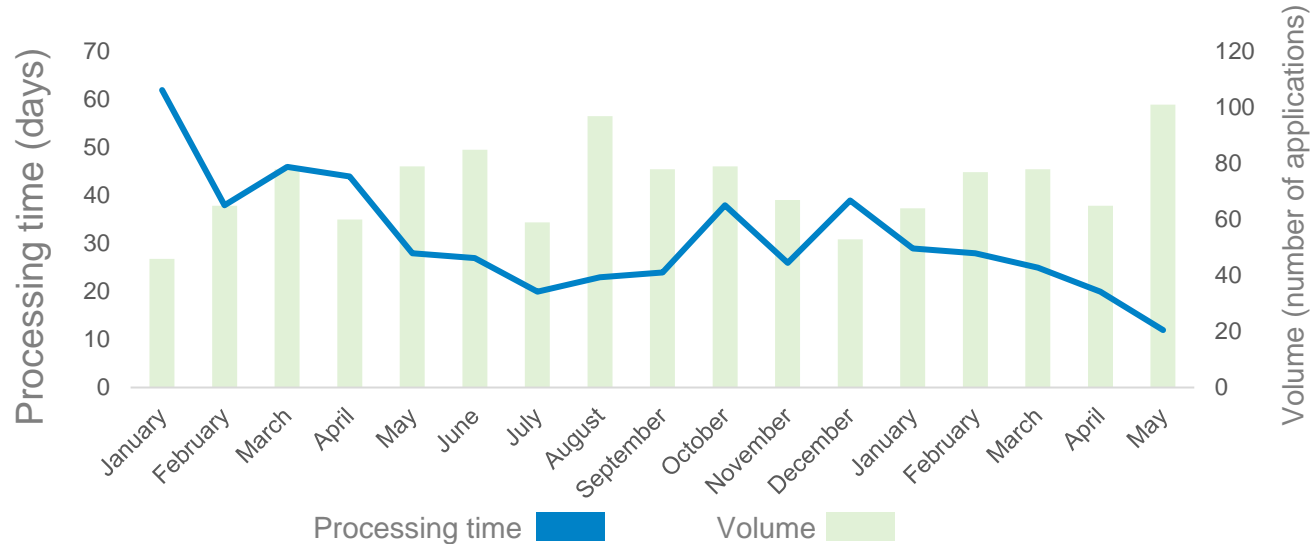
Progress toward each 3-3-3-1 target

A.
Renovations

Target A
Home renovations
3 days
Home renovation permits

Home renovation permits 50% faster 2024 over 2023

- Fast Track permits now issued **in 3 days**
- **50% faster year-to-date** in 2024 versus same period 2023 (23 days vs 44 days)
- **Fastest since 2017** when the City started publishing data on City's Open Data portal



Notes: Data includes broader set of permit applications vs 3-3-3-1 Permitting Dashboard Target A -
Data source is City's open data portal on www.vancouver.ca

Home renovation permit improvement drivers

Key improvement drivers, initiated 2021-03

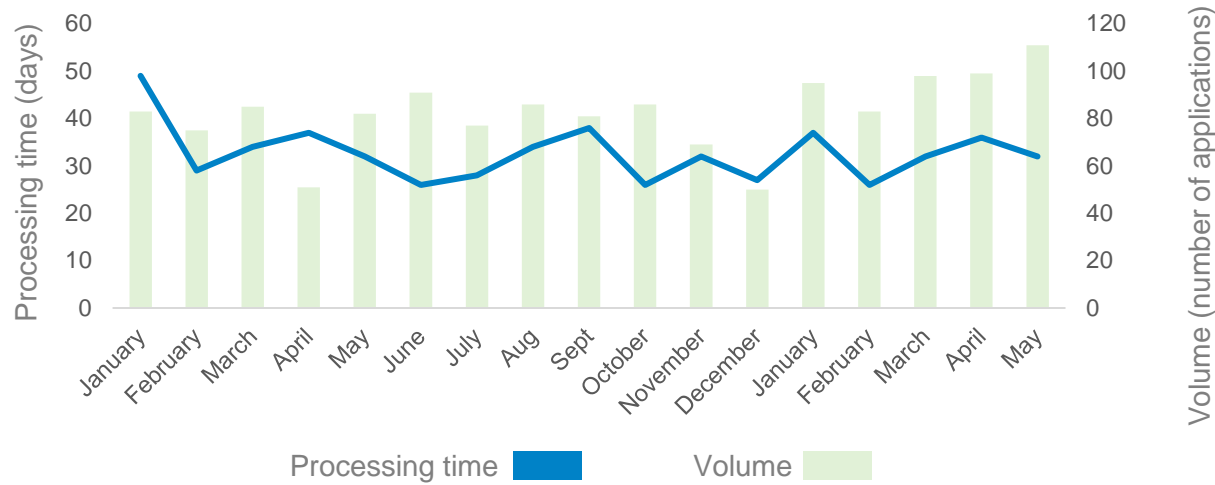
1. Created a Fast Track processing stream (Nov 2021)
2. More permits qualifying for Fast Track processing (currently 63% of total home renovation permits)
 - a) Higher sewer and water connection upgrade threshold (Jan 2024)
 - b) Eliminated requirement for street use permit/insurance (April 2024)
3. Staff time freed up from simple permits to focus on more complex applications

Initiatives underway

1. Removed energy upgrade triggers for renovations under \$250,000 (effective February 2025)
2. Potential sprinkler upgrade exemption for projects under \$250,000 (pending Council decision today)

Commercial renovation permits ~45% faster, Q1-2024 vs Q1-2023

- **10% faster year-to-date** in 2024 versus same period 2023 (33 days vs 36 days)
- **45% faster in Q1-2024 versus Q1-2022** (32 days vs 56 days)



Notes: Data source is City's open data portal on www.vancouver.ca

B.

Single detached homes /
Low density housing

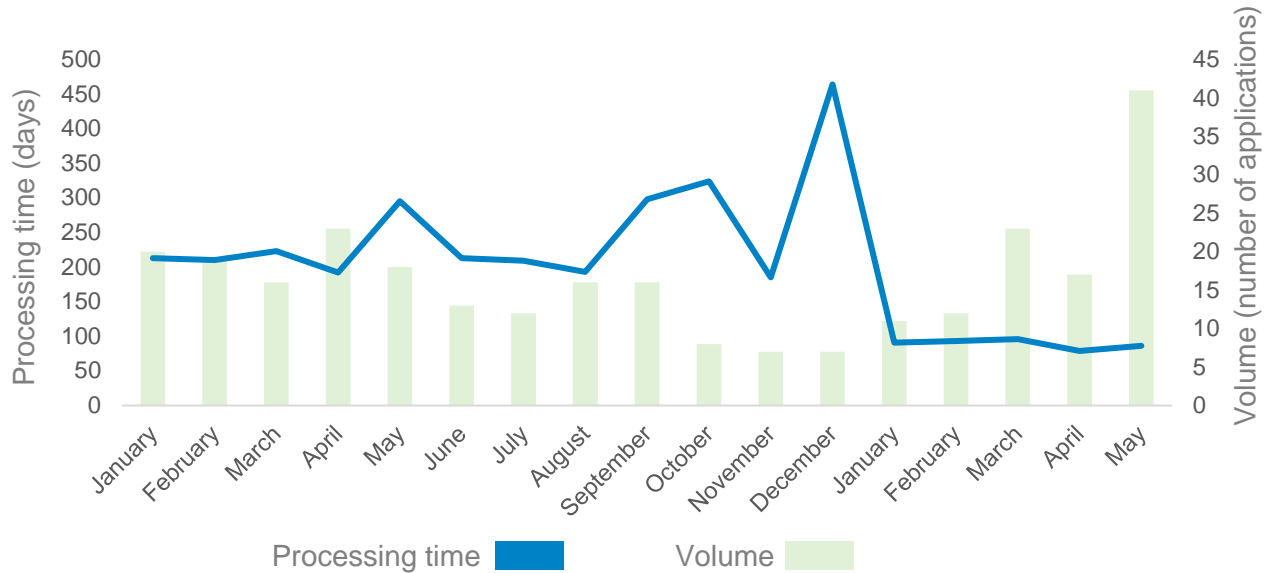


Target B
Detached houses
3 weeks
Single detached houses

A green square graphic with a faint house icon in the background. The text is centered and reads: "Target B", "Detached houses", "3 weeks" (in italics), and "Single detached houses".

Laneway home permits 60% faster 2024 YTD over 2023

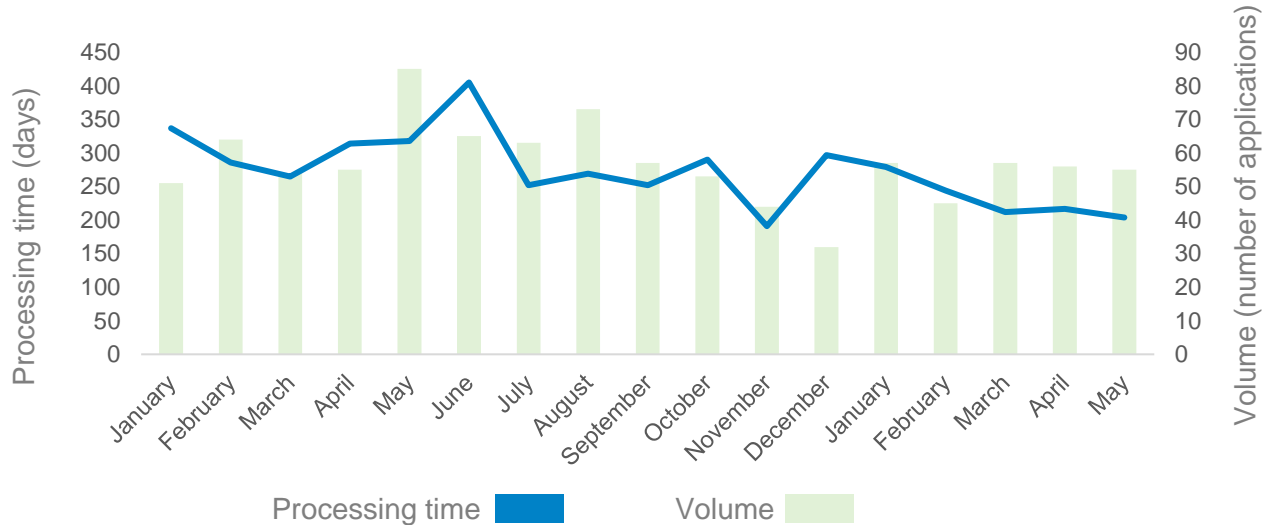
- **60% faster year-to-date** in 2024 versus same period 2023 (13 weeks vs 32 weeks)



Notes: Data includes broader set of permit applications vs 3-3-3-1 Permitting Dashboard Target B -
Data source is City's open data portal on www.vancouver.ca

Detached home permits 25% faster 2024 YTD over 2023

- **Eliminated 500-permit backlog** from January 2022
- **25% faster year-to-date** in 2024 versus same period 2023 (33 weeks vs 43 weeks)



Notes: Data includes broader set of permit applications vs 3-3-3-1 Permitting Dashboard Target B -
Data source is City's open data portal on www.vancouver.ca

Detached home permit improvement drivers

Key improvement drivers, initiated 2021-03

1. Risk-based reviews at plan check, reducing the number of items checked by 64% (implemented April 2022)
2. Enhanced communication with applicants to ensure complete applications (implemented Aug 2022)
3. R1-1 zoning has simplified regulations, resulting in more compliant applications and less time spent checking plans (enacted Oct 2023)

Initiatives underway

1. Launched Permit Requirements Exploration Tool for laneway homes (Sept 2023)
2. Launched eComply pilot for laneway homes (April 2024)

C.
Multi-family
developments

Target C
Small multi-family
3 months

Professionally designed
multi family & mid-rise
project permits

Target D
High-rises
1 year

High rise or large-scale
projects permits

Recently implemented changes will improve processing times

A

Streamlined development conditions

- Simplified and standardized Development Permit conditions
- Eliminated or substantially simplified 66% of permit conditions

March 2024

B

Traffic impact studies

- Significantly reduced requirements for traffic impact studies
- 80% of applications will no longer require traffic studies

Feb 2024

C

Rainwater management plans

- Eliminated requirement for rainwater management plans and related DP conditions
- Previously, it took 56 weeks on average to clear conditions

Sept 2023

D

Dedicated multiplex team

- Created a dedicated team to process multiplex applications
- 170+ applications received
- First permit issued in under 6 months

Nov 2024

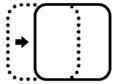
Improvement initiatives underway/on near horizon



1. Provincial changes to land use authorities will enable the City to pre-zone more extensively and avoid the cost and time associated with rezoning for many projects



2. Simplify internal development reviews – e.g., risk-based reviews; relying on professionals; consolidating review groups



3. Digitizing elements of the review process to automate checks that staff currently spend considerable time reviewing



4. Combined permit for multiplex will speed up processing times by up to 50% (Q4-2024)



5. Potential regulatory changes, subject to Council decision

a) Eliminate Horizontal Angle of Daylight regulation

b) Eliminate the requirement for acoustical reports

c) Remove the 10% maximum roof top area limit for mechanical

New provincial rules mean faster permit processing for larger projects



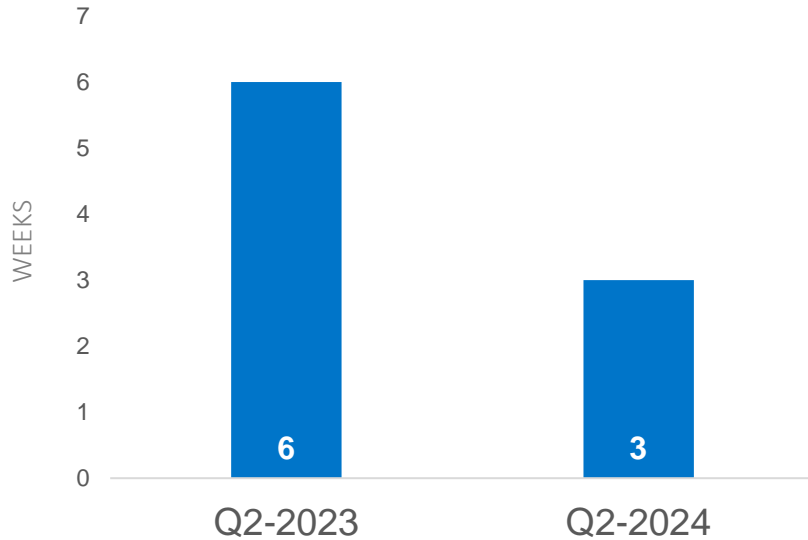
Recent provincial changes to land use regulations will enable the City to pre-zone more extensively, which will eliminate the need for individual rezoning applications, resulting in faster land use approvals for many large, complex developments.

3.

Key licensing achievements, last six months

Business licensing wait times down by 50% year-over-year

Business Licensing Wait Times



- **50% reduction in wait times**
Q2-2024 compared Q2-2023

Business licensing improvement drivers

Key improvement drivers, initiated 2022-01

1. Online business Licensing self service application portal (July 2023)
 - Eliminated duplicate data entry
 - Increases application completeness
2. First municipality to support license applications using provincial digital verifiable credentials
3. 83% reduction in Business License categories
4. Staffing levels back to full complement (January 2024)

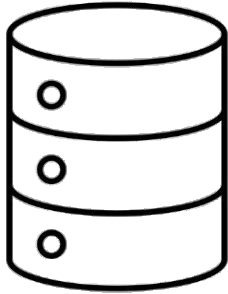
Initiatives underway

1. Long-term rental applications (Q3-2024)
2. Improvements to short-term rental applications (Q3-2024)
3. Self-serve retrieval of business license copies (Q1-2025)

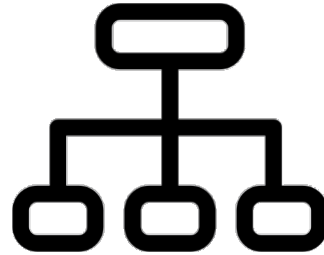
4.

Digital tools improving permitting

Foundational work to pave way for more digital permit processing



Cleaning up/
organising data



Establishing data
governance
structures



Digitizing
regulations, policies
and rules

PRET, a new self-service application preparation tool

The screenshot displays the PRET web application interface. At the top, there are navigation links for "Contact Us", "Register", and "Login". The main heading is "Explore if a laneway house is allowed". Below this, there are several form fields and checkboxes:

- Indicates required
- What is the property address? (328 E 20th Ave, Vancouver, BC)
- Is the main building on the property a single detached house (with or without a secondary suite)? (Yes/No)

A green checkmark indicates that the property is allowed to have a laneway house. Below this, there are two numbered requirements:

- Is deep enough to fit a backyard and laneway house
- Has a path for fire fighter access from the street to the entrance of the laneway house.

There is a link to "Read about the requirements below." and a 3D diagram of a house with a laneway house and a lane. The diagram shows dimensions: "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15", "Lane 10.15".

Property depth requirements:
- The backyard must be at least 4.9 m deep.

On the right side, there is a "Draft project plan" section with the text "We'll create the plan here as you answer questions." Below this is a list of "Permit or licence" options:

- Mechanical Permit
- Street Use Permit
- Sewer & Water Permit
- Sprinkler Permit
- Plumbing Permit
- Building Permit
- Electrical Permit
- Project Level Documents

An "Important note" section states: "We provide this estimate to help you plan your project. Keep in mind that estimates aren't exact. We confirm the exact permits and licences, fees, and requirements when you and your project team apply for each permit or licence."

- Permit Requirements Exploration Tool, launched September 2023
- Application requirements provided all in one place
- Fee estimates, permit status tracking
- Improved application quality, reducing deficiencies and speeding up review timelines
- Offers greater predictability re: permitting costs and timelines

eComply, a new online plan checking tool

[Back to summary](#)

Required spaces

11.3.8.7 Required spaces

Except for a laneway house with no separate bedrooms, a laneway house must include:
(a) 1 main habitable room that is not a bedroom, with a minimum size of 16.7 m² and a minimum dimension of 2.1 m measured between finished wall surfaces; and
(b) at least 1 bedroom with a minimum size of 8.4 m² and a minimum dimension of 2.1 m measured between finished wall surfaces.

1 main habitable room that is not a bedroom


Passed ✔

There is at least one main habitable room that is not a bedroom in the submission.
[See image](#)

with a minimum size of 16.7 m² and

Habitable room reaches the minimum area of 16.7m² at 20.23m².
[See image](#)

Passed
Measured 20.23m²
Criteria 16.7m²

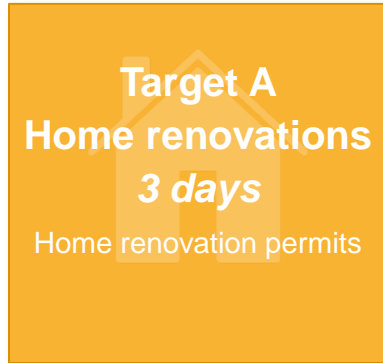


- New online AI-supported plan checking tool
- Laneway home pilot launched April 2024, select applicants
- Immediate graphic and text-based feedback re: areas of non-compliance
- Improved application quality, reducing deficiencies and speeding up review timelines
- Offers greater predictability re: permitting costs and timelines

5.

3-3-3-1 Permitting Dashboard

3-3-3-1 Permit Approval Framework, approved by Council June 2023



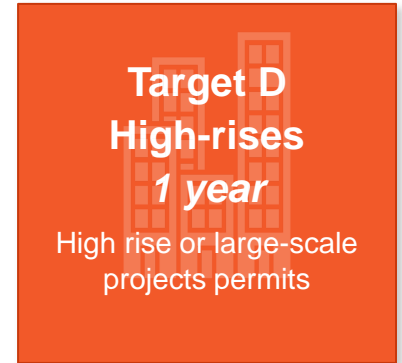
Target A
Home renovations
3 days
Home renovation permits



Target B
Detached houses
3 weeks
Single detached houses

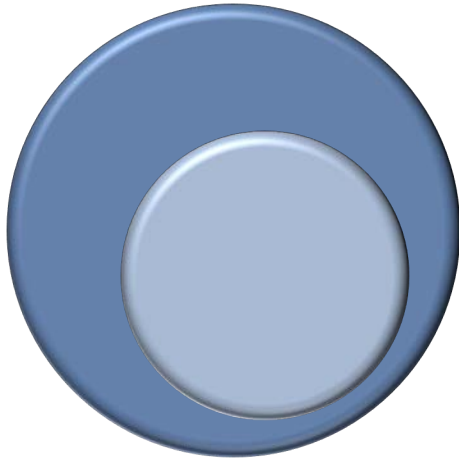


Target C
Small multi-family
3 months
Professionally designed
multi family & mid-rise
project permits



Target D
High-rises
1 year
High rise or large-scale
projects permits

What's included in the 3-3-3-1 Permitting Dashboard metrics?



- Dashboard includes **simple permit applications**, a subset of the total number of applications in each of the four 3-3-3-1 targets
 - = Applications that require relatively straightforward review
- Permit Improvement Program is focused on **moving more applications into this “simple” category**
 - And thereby included in the 3-3-3-1 dashboard metrics

Overview

Target A

Target B

Target C

Target D



A - Simple Home Renovations

Target: 3 days

3 days



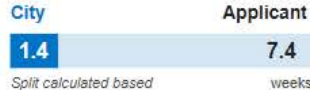
In this period, 68 out of 135 issued renovation permits were simple. 49 of these simple permits met the target of 3 days to issuance.



B - Simple Single Detached Homes

Target: 3 weeks

9 weeks



Split calculated based on a sample of data



In this period, 41 out of 96 issued single detached home permits were simple (i.e. standalone laneway houses). 36 of these simple permits met the target of 3 weeks to issuance.



C - Multi-Family & Mid-Rise

Target: 3 months

19 months



In this period, 5 permits were issued of which 0 met the target of 3 months to issuance.



D - High-Rise & Large Scale

Target: 1 year

Permit processing times for the four permits issued in 2024YTD:

- 1.3 years
- 1.7 years
- 2.5 years
- 3.0 years

In this period, 2 permits were issued of which 0 met the target of 1 year to issuance.

Total Median Processing Time (from Completeness Check to Issuance)

City vs. Applicant Median Processing Time

Permits that Meet Target (City time only)

6.

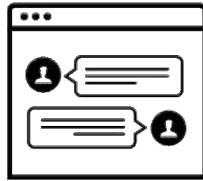
Next steps

Continuing to advance many initiatives to drive further improvements



1.

Regulatory changes
referral report Fall
2024, subject to
Council approval



2.

Continue to digitize
permit processing on
several fronts



3.

Simplify
development
applications, aligned
with provincial
regulatory changes



4.

Accelerate multiplex
application reviews
through permit
simplification and
digitization

Next progress report to Council in Q4-2024

End