



## REPORT

Report Date: May 6, 2025  
Contact: Templar Tsang-Trinaistich  
Contact No.: 604.829.9474  
RTS No.: 17949  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: June 3, 2025  
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Development Approval Procedure By-law

### Recommendation

- A. THAT Council approve, in principle, a new Development Approval Procedure By-law to comply with the *Vancouver Charter* Amendment Act (No. 2), 2024 ("Bill 18"), as set out in this report and generally in accordance with Appendix A;
- FURTHER THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward for enactment the Development Approval Procedure By-law.
- B. THAT Council approve, in principle, amendments to the Procedure By-law to align with Bill 18, as set out in this report and generally as set out in Appendix B;
- FURTHER THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward for enactment amendments to the Procedure By-law.
- C. THAT Council approve, in principle, amendments to the Subdivision By-law regarding a minor amendment concerning form of development, as set out in this report and generally as set out in Appendix C;
- FURTHER THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward for enactment amendments to the Subdivision By-law.

### REPORT SUMMARY

On April 25, 2024, the Provincial government enacted the *Vancouver Charter* Amendment Act (No. 2), 2024 ("Bill 18"). This legislation, when in force, amends the Vancouver Charter to better align with the rules and authorities governing other BC municipalities under the Local Government Act, along with streamlining permitting approvals processes where applicable.

This report describes the provision enabled through Bill 18 that requires Council to adopt a development approval procedure by-law pursuant to section 561.01 of the Vancouver Charter. This report includes a proposed Development Approval Procedure (DAP) By-law to comply with the requirements of the *Vancouver Charter*.

Section 561.01 of the *Vancouver Charter* requires Council to adopt procedures, by by-law, under which an owner of land may apply for an amendment to an Official Development Plan (ODP) or a zoning by-law or apply for a development permit. As staff continue to advance the preparation of the interim city-wide ODP, for Council's consideration in 2026, these procedures will be updated over time to reflect the changing regulatory environment in the City.

This initial version of the DAP By-law sets out procedures for applications to amend existing area-specific ODPs as well as documenting existing practices for rezoning enquiries, application intake, processing, review, and the approval process for rezonings. Staff will continue to explore additional process and procedural improvements, and further amendments to the DAP By-law will be brought forward to Council.

## **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- *Vancouver Charter*
- Zoning and Development By-law
- Procedure By-law
- Vancouver Plan (2022)

## **CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

## **REPORT**

### **Background/Context**

[Bill 18](#) is one of a suite of legislative amendments intended to improve planning processes with the goal of supporting the timely delivery of housing in Vancouver. Bill 18 amends the Vancouver Charter and Council's authority relating to official development plans, the public hearing process, development procedure by-laws, and form of development approvals.

Council received a report on [June 12, 2024](#) about next steps regarding the development of the City's first city-wide Official Development Plan. On [July 10, 2024](#), Council approved changes to the Procedure By-law to better align the zoning approval process with these legislated changes. On [November 26, 2024](#) Council approved changes to Section 3 (Authorities) of the Zoning and Development By-law to delegate form of development approvals from Council to the Director of Planning.

This report describes the legislated requirement from Bill 18 for Council to approve a new DAP By-law (contained in Appendix A), together with consequential amendments to other by-laws.

### **Bill 18 Requirements**

Pursuant to section 561.01, Bill 18 includes an amendment to the Vancouver Charter requiring Council to adopt "development approval procedures". The development approval procedures

must take the form of a by-law that defines procedures for amending an ODP or zoning by-law or the issuance of a development permit.

### Existing Procedures

Procedures for applying to amend zoning by-laws and ODPs are currently not set out in any City by-laws. Instead, there are several by-laws related to the development process that inform procedures, such as the Zoning and Development By-law, [Council] Procedure By-law, the Zoning and Development Fee By-law, Public Notice By-law, and the Heritage Procedure By-law. Rezoning procedures are also documented internally for staff reference and are publicly available in application guides and webpages. Amendments are recommended to some Council adopted by-laws to ensure alignment with the new DAP By-law. Additional opportunities to streamline and consolidate related by-laws for efficiency and clarity will be explored.

Development permit application procedures are currently set out in section 4 of the Zoning and Development By-law. These existing procedures satisfy the Bill 18 requirement for development permits. Staff are not proposing to amend the development permit procedures at this time, although future amendments or consolidation may be considered.

### Jurisdictional Scan

The planning regime of other Metro Vancouver municipalities are governed by the Local Government Act and they are already required to have a development approval procedure by-law. An analysis of select municipalities was completed to inform the contents of this new DAP By-law. Development procedures were identified within by-laws, webpages, forms and checklists, application guides, and Council procedure by-laws for the Cities of Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey, Victoria, Abbotsford, Coquitlam, and the District of West Vancouver.

The development procedure by-laws of other municipalities vary in content and level of detail, however there are many commonalities and best practices to draw upon. Most municipalities have a single or main procedure by-law that covers a variety of application processes such as development permits, development variance permits, temporary use permits, rezonings, area plan amendments, and official development plan amendments. These development procedure by-laws often include a definition section, describe applicant responsibilities, clarify fees, describe public notification and consultation requirements, and describe the authority and decision-making structure for development applications.

### **Strategic Analysis**

The requirement for a DAP By-law set out in section 561.01 of the Vancouver Charter is not yet in effect, but will be brought into effect by an Order in Council from the Province. The DAP By-law should be approved before section 561.01 is brought into effect. Staff have prepared the DAP By-law to ensure a smooth and seamless transition. The DAP By-law will be effective when the relevant section of Bill 18 is brought into effect by the Province, scheduled for early- to mid-June.

The proposed DAP By-law will bring the City of Vancouver into alignment with other municipalities.

The overall goal of the DAP By-law is to support efficiency and transparency in the development approval process. The DAP By-law is intended to provide broad guidance without being overly prescriptive while also articulating specific authorities and discretion available to the Director of

Planning. Where possible, the DAP By-law does not intend to repeat procedure already specified within the Vancouver Charter and the Procedure By-law.

### Contents

The proposed DAP By-law provides guidance for the rezoning and ODP amendment processes for applicants and City staff. The DAP By-law clarifies and documents existing practices as well as new practices enabled through Bill 18. Detailed step-by-step procedures will be documented on the City's website, as well as rezoning manuals, application checklists and forms.

Key contents include:

- **Alignment with recent changes to Council Authority for Rezoning Applications:** As described earlier, Council amended the Procedure By-law in July 2024 to align with new required practices for referral and public hearings decisions. Refer to Figure 1 for a summary.
  - Public hearings are prohibited for rezoning applications that include significant residential development and are consistent with an ODP. Council will consider these applications at Council meetings without referral.
  - Council is *not required* to hold a public hearing for a rezoning application if it is consistent with an ODP and is largely non-residential. For these applications, Council has the option to consider either referring the application to a public hearing *or* to a Council meeting for decision.
  - For applications that are not consistent with an ODP, an application to amend the ODP must also be submitted. Referral and a public hearing will be required.
  - For applications where no ODP applies, referral and a public hearing will be required. Currently, most rezoning applications fall outside of area-specific ODPs and will require a public hearing.

**Figure 1: Council Authority for Rezoning Applications**

Application	Criteria	Decision
<b>Housing</b>	Rezoning applications that are <b>consistent</b> with ODP and have <b>greater than 50%</b> of the gross floor area consisting of residential use	<div>Council meeting</div> <div>application decision</div>
<b>Other Uses</b>	Rezoning applications that are <b>consistent</b> with ODP and have less than 50% of the gross floor area consisting of residential use	<div>Council meeting</div> <div>referral decision</div> <div>OR</div> <div>Public hearing</div> <div>application decision</div> <div>Council meeting</div> <div>application decision</div>
<b>ODP Amendment</b>	Rezoning applications <b>not consistent</b> with ODP	<div>Council meeting</div> <div>referral decision</div> <div>→</div> <div>Public hearing</div> <div>application decision</div>
<b>No Applicable ODP</b>	Rezoning applications where <b>no ODP</b> applies.	

Currently, few rezoning applications fall within an existing ODP, and there is minimal impact to existing processes until adoption of an interim city-wide ODP in June 2026. All rezoning applications outside an ODP area will continue to require a public hearing with associated public notification.

The DAP By-law generally refers to the Vancouver Charter to describe Council's authority regarding rezoning applications. Rezoning application guides will be updated to describe these regulations at the level of detail helpful to applicants.

- **Required rezoning enquiry process:** Applications seeking to amend an ODP or significantly depart from Council-adopted policy will be required to make an enquiry prior to submitting a formal application. In recent years, some applicants have opted to bypass the (voluntary) enquiry stage and submitted applications that are inconsistent with Council adopted policy. In some cases, this has resulted in protracted negotiations and processing to resolve issues. This requirement is intended to reduce downstream issues, set clear expectations on process, and improve collaboration between staff and applicants. Staff are currently developing a range of enquiry options to support the range of needs reflective of development proposal complexity. Enquiry will remain a voluntary step for all other rezoning applications that are generally consistent with an ODP or Council adopted policies.
- **Additional policy work may be required:** Large and unique development sites are identified through area plans and often require additional site design, public engagement and policy development. This process is often referred to as the “enhanced rezoning process” and may be used instead of the standard rezoning enquiry process. This process requires additional City resources and an associated fee. The process is intended to resolve complex issues early, prepare the project for a successful and timely rezoning process to follow. It may result in site-specific policy for Council's consideration.
- **Incomplete application procedures:** For situations when an application is incomplete – where information or documents have not been submitted within a period of six months, the application or enquiry may be cancelled. This is to ensure staff can focus their time and attention on complete applications, with applicants diligently pursuing their proposals.
- **Reapplication procedures:** This section describes next steps following Council's decision to refuse an application or when an application is withdrawn after Council approval.
- **Approval of Form of Development:** This section explains Council's authority and delegation of approval authority to the Director of Planning of the form of development. It also details the process for applicants to request a reconsideration of the Council's decision. Refer to the [November 26, 2024](#) report for more information.
- **Public notice and engagement:** This section documents standard public notice requirements from the Vancouver Charter and options for additional engagement during the application process prior to decision by Council – dependent on project complexity and needs.
- **Responsibilities of applicants and staff:** Standard responsibilities for applicants are described, such as completing the application form, submitting specified materials, completing payment, and providing revisions upon request. Standard professional

expectations for communicating updates and delays are also described for both applicants and staff. As part of future improvements, staff will be exploring the establishment of service level agreements (SLAs) for application streams.

The report and proposed DAP By-law are an initial Vancouver Charter compliance exercise to ensure Council can continue to consider rezoning and ODP amendment applications pursuant to Bill 18. The DAP By-law proposes minor refinements to the existing rezoning process and enables the Director of Planning to appropriately implement these through more detailed procedures. Detailed interpretations of the DAP By-law will be located within supplementary material such as rezoning application forms, guides, and the City's website. The intention is to provide applicants with general procedural clarity and transparency on specific City practices.

Staff continue to work on additional improvements for rezonings, and as these matters are advanced, they will be incorporated as additional changes to the DAP By-law for Council's consideration.

#### Consequential By-law Amendments for Form of Development Approval

This report also brings forward two consequential by-law amendments from the [November 26, 2024](#) report where Council delegated the form of development approvals to the Director of Planning. Staff identified two minor modifications to the Procedure By-law and the Subdivision By-law to bring these into alignment with the new practice. These two amendments are not directly related to the new DAP By-law but are a part of the broader implementation of Bill 18.

#### Procedure By-law Amendments to streamline public hearings

As existing procedures were reviewed, staff identified an opportunity to reduce the length of public hearings. Currently, a 5-minute recess is held to confirm additional speakers for every public hearing item. This practice, along with procedures for electronic meetings, was introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 5-minute recess was intended to allow staff time to identify callers and prepare the queue to speak. Since then, it has been observed that two minutes would be sufficient time to identify callers on the line for most public hearing items. In the case where there are many unidentified speakers on the line, staff may require more than two minutes to identify speakers, which can be assessed during the meeting.

Staff are also seeking to clarify that where a public hearing is prohibited, there is no reason to follow the referral process. Instead, the rezoning will simply be brought before Council for its consideration at a regular Council meeting.

To implement these amendments to the Procedure By-law, notice must be given in writing and openly announced at an earlier regular meeting in accordance with section 164.1(2) of the Vancouver Charter. Notice will be in writing on the June 3, 2025 Council meeting agenda and the notice will be announced during the meeting.

#### Future By-law Updates

In line with Council's 3-3-3-1 direction, staff are continuously working on procedure and process updates and expect to bring forward additional updates to the DAP By-law in alignment with other by-law updates. Through this, combining other procedures into a single by-law document will be explored.

Bill 18 also requires Council to adopt an interim city-wide official development plan (ODP) by June 30, 2026. As the initial DAP By-law proposed in this report is being advanced ahead of the interim city-wide ODP, staff will bring forward updates to the DAP By-law at the time of approval of the ODP.

#### Development Permit Application Procedures

Additional work is needed to determine if development permit application procedures (contained in Section 4 of the Zoning and Development By-law) should be merged with the DAP By-law. Maintaining separate by-laws for these two processes in the interim will reflect current practice, noting that the City will continue to explore opportunities to streamline our procedures, processes and regulations. A future amendment to the DAP By-law is contemplated by staff to harmonize these two sets of procedures.

#### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report's recommendations.

#### **Legal Implications**

The proposed new DAP By-law is authorized through Bill 18 and the Vancouver Charter. It requires Council to define procedures for amending an official development plan and zoning by-law. This By-law will come into effect when the new section 561.01 of the Vancouver Charter comes into force and will ensure the procedures are in place ahead of any applications submitted after this date.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Appendix A

### DRAFT Development Approval Procedure By-law

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, in public meeting, enacts as follows:

#### PART 1 INTERPRETATION

##### By-law name

- 1.1 The name of this By-law, for citation, is the Development Approval Procedure By-law.

##### Scope

- 1.2 This By-law establishes procedures to facilitate Council decisions on Zoning and Development By-law amendments and Official Development Plan (ODP) amendments.
- 1.3 Procedures relating to applications for the issuance of development permits are in section 4 of the Zoning and Development By-law.

##### Definitions

- 1.4 In this By-law:

**“active”** means an application that has been accepted as complete but has not been enacted, or withdrawn.

**“applicant”** means the owner, or owner’s authorized representative, of a site that is the subject of an application under this By-law.

**“application”** means an application for a zoning amendment or an ODP amendment under this By-law.

**“application form”** means an application form for a zoning amendment or an ODP amendment under this By-law.

**“application guide”** means supplementary information about the rezoning or ODP amendment process with descriptions and criteria for including specific application materials.

**“application materials”** means reports, studies, drawings, and other documents identified by City staff that should be provided to form a complete application.

**“by-law”** means this By-law, including all the schedules.

**“Director of Planning”** means the person appointed by Council pursuant to section 560 of the Vancouver Charter and includes the authorized representatives of the Director of Planning.



**“enhanced rezoning proposal”** means an enquiry that requires additional and substantive upfront planning and is subject to Schedule 2, Section 9 of the Zoning and Development Fee By-law (Application Requiring Policy, Planning and Consultation Work).

**“enquiry”** means a formal rezoning proposal required under section 2.2 of this By-law that is subject to Schedule 2, Section 8 of the Zoning and Development Fee By-law (Application for Rezoning Advice), and involves correspondence and documented advice from staff.

**“Official Development Plan” or “ODP”** means an Official Development Plan adopted under Part XXVII of the Vancouver Charter.

**“policy”** means a Council-approved direction, adopted by resolution, relating to matters such as planning principles, specific land uses, development in specific areas, and rezoning that is intended to guide decision-making and land use.

**“rezoning”** means the process of amending the Zoning and Development By-law to enable a site-specific development initiated by an applicant.

**“site”** means the land or lands subject to a rezoning enquiry or application under this By-law.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

- 1.5 All documents accompanying a rezoning application or rezoning enquiry submitted to the City become the property of the City and are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

### **Severability**

- 1.6 A decision by a court that any part of this By-law is illegal, void, or unenforceable severs that part from this By-law, and is not to affect the balance of this By-law.

## **PART 2 REZONING PRE-APPLICATION**

### **Rezoning Enquiry**

- 2.1 The Director of Planning may create rezoning enquiry forms, enquiry guides, and supplementary materials.
- 2.2 A rezoning enquiry is required for rezoning applications that is not consistent with an ODP or where the Director of Planning determines that the proposed development represents a significant departure from Council policy or triggers an ODP amendment.

- 2.3 If an applicant does not provide information or documents requested by City staff regarding a rezoning enquiry within six (6) months of the request, the Director of Planning may cancel the rezoning enquiry and submission of a new enquiry will be necessary.
- 2.4 Staff advice documented through a rezoning enquiry should be reflected in the rezoning application. Staff advice is intended to reflect Council policy and priorities at the time the advice is provided. Failure to reflect staff advice in a rezoning application may result in processing delays during the rezoning application process.
- 2.5 Director of Planning advice provided through a rezoning enquiry does not constitute a recommendation for approval of the application.

### **Enhanced Rezoning**

- 2.6 The Director of Planning may require an applicant to submit an enhanced rezoning proposal in addition to or instead of a rezoning enquiry. The Director of Planning may require additional submissions, public consultation, and reviews by advisory panels or other bodies as part of an enhanced rezoning proposal.

## **PART 3 APPLICANT AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Responsibilities of Applicants**

- 3.1 An applicant seeking Council's consideration of a rezoning application or ODP amendment application must:
- (a) notify all existing residential tenants on the site prior to submission of the application and as further requested by staff;
  - (b) attach the relevant application materials that enable a review, to be checked for completeness by City staff;
  - (c) complete and file an application form with the City;
  - (d) pay all fees imposed by the Zoning and Development Fee By-law and the Miscellaneous Fees By-law;
  - (e) communicate delays, disclose transfers of ownership, or any change in applicant contact information to staff in a timely manner;
  - (f) supplement, revise, or resubmit application materials requested by staff during the application process in a timely manner; and
  - (g) be prepared to present to and attend Council meetings and other meetings including tenant meetings, community meetings or advisory board meetings as requested by staff.

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- 3.2 Staff processing an enquiry or application must:

- (a) communicate a target processing timeline to an applicant upon intake of a complete enquiry or application submission;
- (b) provide updates to an applicant on any enquiry or application deficiencies, issues or delays in a timely manner;
- (d) prepare materials for public consultation and arrange meetings with tenants, community, and advisory boards as necessary; and
- (e) arrange public notice as necessary and prepare a report for Council decision.

## **PART 4 REZONING APPLICATION**

### **Application Intake**

- 4.1 The Director of Planning may create and amend rezoning application forms, application guides, and supplementary materials.
- 4.2 A site may not be subject to more than one active applicant-initiated rezoning application at any time.
- 4.3 Notwithstanding 4.2, the Director of Planner may permit an applicant to seek to modify the conditions of approval or draft By-law of an active rezoning application following Council's approval in principle, if the modifications are deemed minor. A report containing these proposed modifications will be brought to Council for decision.

### **Application Processing**

- 4.4 Upon receiving a complete rezoning application, staff will circulate the application for both internal and external review, as necessary, and prepare conditions of approval.
- 4.5 After completing the processing steps under 4.4, staff must bring forward a rezoning application report to Council where the Director of Planning may recommend approval, refusal or further considerations, for decision by Council.
- 4.6 Council must consider a rezoning application report brought forward under section 4.5 of this By-law but may refuse to refer an application to a Council meeting or Public Hearing.

### **Incomplete and Inactive Applications**

- 4.7 If an applicant does not provide information or documents requested by City staff regarding the rezoning application within six (6) months of the request, the Director of Planning may cancel the rezoning application.

### **Approval of Form of Development**

- 4.8 In accordance with section 565 (1.1) of the Vancouver Charter, Council has delegated the authority to approve the form of development to the Director of Planning by enacting section 3.1.7 of the Zoning and Development By-law.

- 4.9 An applicant is entitled to have Council reconsider any form of development decision by the Director of Planning by delivering a request in writing to the City Clerk within 14 days of the decision, setting out the reasons for the request.

## **PART 5 ODP AMENDMENTS**

### **ODP Amendment Application Processing**

- 5.1 The Director of Planning may create and amend ODP amendment application forms, ODP amendment application guides, and supplementary materials.
- 5.2 A site may not be subject to more than one active applicant-initiated ODP amendment application at any time.
- 5.3 Upon receiving a complete ODP amendment application, staff will circulate the application for internal and external review, as appropriate.
- 5.4 Staff must bring forward an ODP amendment application report to Council where the Director of Planning may recommend approval, refusal or further considerations, for decision by Council.
- 5.5 Council must consider the ODP amendment application report brought forward under section 5.4 of this By-law but may refuse to refer an application to a Public Hearing.

## **PART 6 PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

### **Public Notice**

- 6.1 Notice must be given in accordance with the Vancouver Charter.

### **Public Consultation**

- 6.2 The Director of Planning may provide for additional public consultation by:
- (a) requiring that one or more notification signs are installed on the development site;
  - (b) instructing staff to post information on an application webpage,
  - (c) instructing staff to send postcard notification(s) to neighbours,
  - (d) instructing staff to host one or more in-person or virtual events, and
  - (e) requiring other forms of public engagement as appropriate.
- 6.3 Official Development Plan amendments are subject to additional consultation requirements in accordance with the Vancouver Charter.

## **PART 7 COUNCIL AUTHORITY**

### **Requirement for Public Hearing**

- 7.1 Council must comply with section 559.02 of the Vancouver Charter.
- 7.2 Following a council meeting or a public hearing regarding a rezoning or a public hearing regarding an ODP amendment, Council may:
- (a) approve the application;
  - (b) approve the application with amendments;
  - (c) refuse the application; or
  - (d) refer the application back to staff.

### **Reapplication**

- 7.3 Reapplications are governed by [section 6](#) of the Zoning and Development By-law and section 561.01(3) of the Vancouver Charter.

## **PART 8 ENACTMENT**

- 8.1 This By-law is to come into force and take effect upon section 8 of the Vancouver Charter Amendment Act (No 2.), 2024 coming into force by regulation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council of British Columbia.
- 8.2 Any rezoning applications submitted prior to this By-law coming into effect are not subject to section 2.2 of this By-law.

ENACTED by Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

**Appendix B****DRAFT By-law to amend the Procedure By-law No. 12577  
regarding alignment with the Vancouver Charter**

1. This By-law amends the indicated provisions of the Procedure By-law.
2. In section 1.2, Council strikes the definition of “referral report” and substitutes the following:  
  
““referral report” means a Council report or Council member’s motion requesting that Council decide whether or not to refer a rezoning matter to public hearing or Council meeting, if a public hearing is required or optional;”.
3. In section 3.9 (a), Council adds “form of development reconsideration meeting,” after “sign By-law reconsideration meeting,”.
4. In section 13.13 (c), Council strikes “(ix) 5-minute recess to confirm additional speakers,” and replaces it with “(ix) 2-minute recess to confirm additional speakers,”.
5. This By-law is to come into force and take effect on the date of its enactment.

ENACTED by Council this                      day of                      , 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

**Appendix C****DRAFT By-law to amend the Subdivision By-law  
regarding alignment with the Vancouver Charter**

1. This By-law amends the indicated provisions of the Subdivision By-law.
2. Council strikes Section 9.8 (d), and replaces it with:  
    “(d) involves land zoned CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District and where the proposal is not compatible with an approved form of development or where there is no approved form of development; or”.
3. This By-law is to come into force and take effect on June 3, 2025.

ENACTED by Council this                      day of                      , 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk