

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT TIMELINES (2020)

Over the past several years, the BC Government has come a long way in ensuring that all government regulatory requirements are necessary, easy to understand, and do not impose an unnecessary administrative cost on citizens and businesses.

The government's stated goal is to develop partnerships with local governments, the federal government, and the private and not-for-profit sectors to build 114,000 units of affordable market rental, non-profit, co-op, supported social housing and owner-purchased housing. The commitment is also to develop a modern, streamlined regulatory environment acting as the foundation for strategies which enhance competitiveness and innovation, attract investment, and build a vibrant and self-sustaining economy that benefits all British Columbians.¹

The Chamber applauds the efforts of the BC Government to improve this process; however, the same is not true of local municipal governments. Significant issues with obtaining timely, local government approvals on Development Permits (DPs) continue to hamper development opportunities in many communities across the province. Currently, there is no incentive for municipalities to address issues surrounding DPs, as the Community Charter provides local government with exclusive power over the process.

Development Permit application processes vary in municipalities. There are no common guidelines to application timelines, and there is no incentive for municipalities to address the issue. Frustration and costs caused by these delays in many incidents result in projects and development opportunities not being brought forward.

It is imperative that the Provincial Government take action to ensure that the potential for development opportunities in our communities and the rights of applications are protected.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Provincial Government:

1. Amend the Community Charter & Local Government Act to:
 - a. Establish reasonable timelines and focused guidelines for the approval of development permits by local governments;
 - b. Provide standard requirements for the submission of development permits to local government such as specific drawing requirements, traffic survey, etc.;
 - c. Provide standard criteria for local governments on which to approve development permit applications;
 - d. Specify all costs which a local government may specifically attribute to a project;
2. Apply at top priority to:
 - a. Development permit timelines; and

¹ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/premier-cabinet-mlas/minister-letter/robinson-mandate.pdf>

- b. Provide an appeal process for the applicant, should a local government fail to meet the requirements as specified in the Act.

