LAKE COUNTRY
Life. The Okanagan Way.

DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS PROGRAM

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

September 29, 2025

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1.0 <u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>

This report provides the results of the third and final phase of the District of Lake Country's Development Approvals Process project. This project is made possible by grant funding provided from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Local Government Development Approvals Process Review (DAPR) program. Phases 1 – 2 of this project were completed by others and Phase 3 completed by Urban Systems. This project, and the funding program that made it possible, were both informed by the 2019 "Provincial Development Approvals Process Review" (DAPR) report.

This Phase of the project aimed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of District's intake and processing of development applications (such as development variances, rezonings, and Development Permits), in line with the principles that emerged from the Province's 2019 DAPR Report:

- Certainty
- Transparent
- Collaborative

- Flexible
- Appropriate Timelines
- Achieve Outcomes in the Public Interest

The Phase 3 process involved a review of existing policies, bylaws, and application reference materials, a walk through of typical application processes with staff, as well as numerous informal interviews – 'conversations' – with staff across the departments involved in the day to day application processing to gain insights in new opportunities. The process utilized an 'appreciative inquiry' approach to frame conversations positively, focused on what worked well and how goals of streamlining and effectiveness could be incorporated. This final phase of work within the District results in 3 major components of output:

- Reference materials to both internal and public communications;
- Application processing changes; and
- A series of recommendations for staff and District Council to consider for further action.

A summary of the major insights from this process includes the following:
- The necessary and appropriate development application review steps are well established within existing District processes. Broadly speaking there is no need within the District for any fundamental alteration of application review processes, nor are there glaring omissions of best practices that might be expected to be incorporated.
- Council has already taken significant steps to make bylaw amendments that support process improvements and Best Practices. This includes a recent overhaul of the District's Procedures Bylaw, delegation of approval of Technical Development Permits to staff, and support for revisions to the OCP to clarify Development Permit requirements and exemptions.
- Additionally, there have been significant staffing additions and staff-initiated procedural changes before and during the process, respectively, which also support application streamlining and best practices.
- Opportunities for improving efficiency of staff-led application processes include better establishing application stage timing benchmarks (which are within the District's control), clarifying and strictly enforcing minimum application submission requirements, and improving collaboration and interdepartmental understanding of development application processing requirements.

- Many established Best Practices are, as a result already in place or partially implemented, putting the District in a strategic position to continue to refine and hone procedures that are already in place without the need for significant disruptive change.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A detailed discussion of key observations, a review of best practices and how these can be implemented within the District, and a list of recommendations are all provided in detail in the report. A brief summary of the categories of recommendations is provided below, with those which are being completed as an outcome of this report noted. Other recommendations will require further work from staff and in some cases consideration by Council for bylaw amendments.

Category	Recommended Action	Completed with DAP
External Communication Materials	Revise Application Forms and Checklists	✓
	Develop Supporting Application Information Guides	✓
Processing Improvements	Reinforce Application Timing and Sequencing	✓
	Document Standard Operating Procedures	✓
	Strengthen Pre-Application Meeting Processes	✓ (Partial)
	Improve Application Intake Process	✓
	Improve Council Report Scheduling Protocols for Council Agendas	✓
	Revise Development Notification Signs Requirements	✓ (Partial)
	Simplify Attendance of Development Review "CORE" Team Meetings	✓
	Develop and Strengthen Internal Application Review Resources	✓
Organizational Development and Change Management	Strengthen Front-Line Staffing Capacity with Cross-Disciplinary Training	
	Expand the use of Application Metrics and Reporting	
Bylaw/Policy Changes	Official Community Plan Amendments to Development Permit Guidelines	
	Review Subdivision & Development Servicing Bylaw for Clarity	
	Audit Historical DVPs and Identify Zoning Bylaw Changes	
	Amend the Development Approvals Procedures Bylaw to Streamline Approvals and Align with DAPR Changes	
	Increase Delegation of Authority to Staff for Minor Development Variance Permits and Form and Character Development Permits	
	Review Fees & Charges Bylaw to Maximize Cost Recovery	
Systems & Technology	Utilize Technology to Improve Internal and External Communication	
	Enhance Planning Information on the District Website	
	Develop Digital Application Submission Program	

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2.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The District of Lake Country (the District) was awarded a grant from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Local Government Development Approvals Process Review (DAPR) program to conduct a review of its Development Approvals Processes (the Review). The Province of BC introduced the DAPR program in 2019 as a part of the broad and ongoing push from the province to support increased housing supply.

When a development approval process is clear, transparent, and focuses on client and community needs, it is more efficient to administer and helps ensure compliance with local government regulations and policies. Conversely, an inefficient system with ad hoc requirements and unclear mandates can create confusion, generate delays, and add to the cost of planning, design, and construction. Not only does this make it difficult for staff and those involved in the approvals process, this all may discourage development.[1]

The guiding principles behind the UBCM funding program and this project are:

	Achieve Outcomes in the Public Interest	The approvals process is set up to support development that is strategically aligned with adopted community plans and the public interest, supports community values, and generates high-quality built environments.
	Certainty	The requirements, timeframes and costs of development approvals are clearly outlined and communicated in advance or as early as possible in the application process.
	Transparent	Decisions during the approval process are documented and communicated in a clear and timely manner.
	Collaborative	Local governments and applicants work collaboratively to achieve desired outcomes. Where public involvement is appropriate, the process seeks public input early and in an informed manner.
	Flexible	The process achieves consistency while providing some flexibility to respond to unique opportunities and encourages innovation.
	Timeliness	The development approval process occurs on timeframes that are appropriate to the level of complexity of the application and requires all parties to acknowledge their responsibility to provide necessary information in a timely manner.

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[1] It should be noted that assessing District Staff's workloads and evaluating the capabilities or performance of District Staff members involved in processing development applications is not a focus of this process.
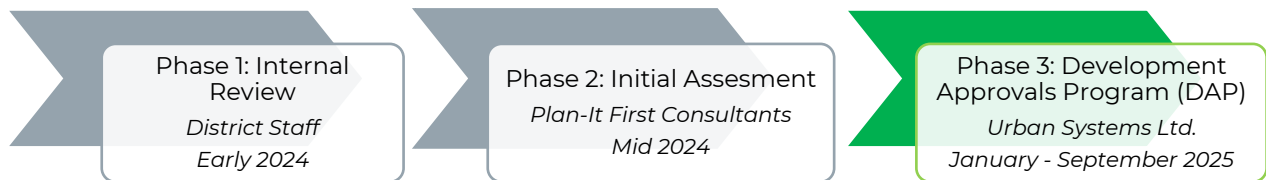
2.1 GOAL AND PURPOSE

The goal of the Review is to help identify opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the District's development approvals processes. The Review assesses the current development application process, including identifying additional opportunities for streamlining, delegation of authority to staff, enhancing clarity in communication, and reducing the need for amendments and variances. The Review has considered the current development landscape to provide recommendations. Efforts taken by the District to examine and improve its approval process efficiency, as well as its regulatory requirements, will make it easier for developments to proceed and meet the needs and interests of the community.

This report summarizes the learnings from reviewing information related to the development approval processes from application requirements to submission, through to approval.

2.2 APPROACH

To utilize the UBCM grant funding, the District divided it's review it into three phases. Phase 1 and 2 of this initiative was started in 2024, completed by others, and resulted in a series of bylaw amendments to support improved application processing as well as some organizational changes. Phase 3 of the Review (Development Approvals Program (DAP), completed by Urban Systems, is the third and final phase. It aimed to specifically review and streamline development application processes, including support with new internal and external facing approvals related documents and reference materials. The project will end with training conversations with staff to introduce new materials and procedures.

Phase 1: Internal Review
District Staff
Early 2024

Phase 2: Initial Assesment
Plan-It First Consultants
Mid 2024

Phase 3: Development Approvals Program (DAP)
Urban Systems Ltd.
January - September 2025

The following summarizes the steps involved in Phase 3 of the DAP process review and the foundation for the recommendations in this report.

- Reviewed applicable background material provided by the District with respect to Phases 1 and 2 of the DAP review process.

- Reviewed relevant bylaws and policies and background information as detailed in this report.

- Conducted staff workshops and interviews to understand the current development approvals procedures focused on what works, what doesn't, and why.

- Developed draft versions of a new standardized development approvals process tailored to the District's goals and current challenges in alignment with legislation and municipal best practices. This allowed for District staff's input followed by a finalized development approvals process.

- Developed user-friendly forms, handouts, templates, informational bulletins and other guidance documents to support a revised development approvals process to be used by both

internal staff and customers. The consulting team worked closely with District staff to ensure clarity and usability of the documentation.

- Established recommendations for bylaw, policy and procedural changes as detailed in **Section 6.0** of this report.

- Undertook collaborative staff training on the implementation of new processes and documentation.

2.3 REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is structured into the following subsequent sections:

- **Development Approvals Context**: Provides information on the current landscape of development approvals, including recent Province policy and legislation, population growth in Lake Country, an overview of the existing policy framework, details on recent permitting data, organizational structure, staffing levels, and comparative information on fees and structure.

- **Development Approval Processes**: **Observations and Discussion:** This section provides detailed discussion on the results of a review of District policies, materials, and extensive conversations with staff about the Development Approvals Process and contains further discussion about policy and procedural changes that can be taken by the District to improve the Development Approvals Process.

- **Best Practices**: Provides an overview of approaches to development approvals taken by local governments that are in line with Province DAPR principles, along with examples. This section indicates whether the District is currently following these best practices and provides some insight into how they might better approvals processes

- **Summary of Recommendations:** This section provides a detailed summary all recommendations that result from the Development Approvals Program project and indicates whether they have been implemented as part of the project or will require further work by the District to put in place.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS CONTEXT

3.1 PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Ongoing provincial initiatives are setting the pace and tone for development in local governments across B.C.; in particular, the Homes for B.C. report informed the creation of the DAPR program and Bill 26. Since the initiation of the DAPR program, there has been further progress and advancements on these initiatives, including the Province's Homes for People Action Plan which was released in early 2023, and the introduction of further new legislation in 2024 which intends to facilitate a more pro-active approach to planning for growth and new housing.

Homes for BC: A Government's 30 Point Plan for Housing Affordability

In this report drafted in 2018, the Province of B.C. recognized that local governments are a strategic partner in delivering affordable housing and that municipalities are on the front lines of the housing crisis. The Province of B.C. is committed to empowering and supporting local governments' efforts to accelerate the construction of housing that meets communities need. The development approval process plays an important role in the realization of the community's development vision and ensuring that local interests are met, including an adequate supply of safe, well-serviced, suitable, attainable and adequate housing.

Development Approvals Process Review (DAPR)

In 2019, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) completed the third stage of the province-wide DAPR initiative. The DAPR was initiated to better understand the challenges facing development approvals across B.C. as part of a broader effort to identify barriers to creating additional affordable housing. Consultation with rural, suburban, and urban local governments, and various non-government stakeholders provided a cross-section of the diverse challenges facing the development approvals process. This engagement allowed MAH to assess the common challenges, outline the qualities of effective and efficient processes, and identify opportunities to improve development application and approval processes across the province.

The DAPR identified internal issues that local governments in B.C. face in their application processes, including:

- Incomplete or poor-quality submissions by proponents;
- Increased complexity of requirements;
- Inconsistent development permit area guidelines; and,
- Contradictory advice across departments.

In addition, challenges identified by the development industry included:

- Lack of transparency on the status of development applications; and,
- Lack of consistency of requirements between adjacent local governments.

This report considers these issues provides recommendations to help facilitate development process improvements in the District.

Bill 26 – Municipal Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2), 2021

Bill 26: Municipal Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2) 2021, was given Royal Assent on November 25th, 2021. The Bill proposed amendments to various sections in the *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*, including:

- Removal of the default requirement to hold public hearings for Zoning Bylaw amendments that are consistent with the OCP;
- Allowing for delegation of decisions on 'minor' development variance permits; and
- Enabling local governments to determine specific methods for public notice requirements.

Changes regarding public hearings, delegation of development variance permits, and public notice as applicable to development applications were considered as part of this review.

Homes for People Action Plan

The Homes for People Action Plan was released in 2023, by the Province of B.C. It aims to tackle persistent permitting and zoning challenges. Structured around four key pillars – 1) unlocking more homes faster; 2) delivering housing people can afford; 3) supporting those with the greatest need; and 4) prioritizing people over profit. The plan in part triggered bold actions such as permitting small-scale multi-unit homes (townhomes, duplexes, triplexes), offering forgivable loans for secondary suites, streamlining permitting, and launching a digital permitting system. The primary goal of the action plan is to create optimal conditions to encourage faster housing construction and reduce development costs, by way of relaxed zoning regulations, a focus on targeted types of housing and more incentives. The action plan contributed to the implementation of Bill 44.

Bill 44 – Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023

Bill 44 – Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023, was given Royal Assent on November 30th, 2023. The Bill introduced several amendments to various sections in the *Local Government Act* to shift local governments towards a more proactive, long-term approach to planning. The legislative changes have required local governments to:

- Identify their housing needs using a standard method on a regular basis for a more consistent and robust understanding of local housing needs over 5 and 20 years. An Interim Housing Needs Report is required to be completed by December 31, 2025. The first regular Housing Needs Reports are required to be completed by December 31, 2028, and every five years thereafter;
- Plan for housing needs in OCPs on a regular basis with updates following each Housing Needs Reports;
- Align Zoning Bylaws with OCPs and Housing Needs Reports to pre-zone for local housing need on a regular basis;
- Prohibit public hearings for rezonings for housing projects that are consistent with OCPs; and
- Accommodate small-scale, multi-unit housing in land use zones that were otherwise restricted to single-detached dwellings or duplexes.

These changes are intended to help local governments better understand and respond to housing needs in their communities while providing more affordable housing options without requiring potentially onerous rezonings and reducing administrative requirements. This legislation resulted in a once-in-a-generation shift of the nature of planning in the Province. The shift in policy and procedural response to this legislation is still occurring and will take time to fully realize and implement.

3.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

3.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Since incorporation, Lake Country's population has increased by 75%, growing from 9,010 in 1996 to 15,817 in 2021. According to the District's *2021 Census Profile*, the District of Lake Country's population rapidly grew 22.4% between 2016 (12,922) and 2021 (15,817), as shown in **Figure 1**, which was well above the provincial average of 7.6% growth over the same period. In 2021, individuals identifying as Indigenous made up 6% of the District's total population.. This growth builds on a 21.8% increase between 2006 (9,606) and 2011 (11,708) and a 10.4% increase between 2011 and 2016. This is an increase of 35% since 2011, indicating the District has grown at a faster pace than both the Central Okanagan Regional District (23%) and B.C. (14%) in the same period.

It is important to note that the Census data does not reflect the community's "shadow population" comprised of vacationers, second homeowners, and seasonal residents, which may impact growth and the overall demand for services, infrastructure, amenities, and housing in Lake Country.

Figure 1. Population Growth – 2006-2021 (Census)
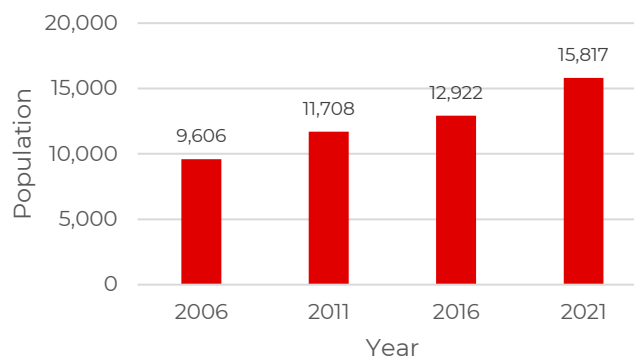
Looking ahead, under the medium population growth scenario outlined in Lake Country's OCP and 2023 Housing Needs Assessment, the number of residents in Lake Country is projected to increase by 3,894 people (26.8%) between 2021 and 2031. Between 2016 and 2036, this results in a 2.4% average annual population growth rate, which is lower than recent trends where the District's population increased at a 3.5% growth rate or by 4,109 people between 2011 and 2021.

According to the 2021 Census, Lake Country's median age was 44, comparable to the regional median of 44.2 and slightly above the provincial median of 43.1. The proportion of seniors (aged 65+) has increased in Lake Country, from 14% in 2011 to 18% in 2021. Similarly, Lake Country has seen the largest population increase in the 60-64 age category during this period. An aging population coupled with increasing numbers of seniors looking to retire in Lake Country has likely contributed towards this rise. Population aging is happening province-wide and Lake Country's demographic dynamics reflect such trends. Due to the potential demography of their "shadow population," Lake Country may have a slightly older community than is reflected in the Census data. That said, Lake Country has a younger population than the Central Okanagan region, with 81% of the population below the age of 64, compared to the region with 77% of the population below the age of 64.

3.2.2 REAL ESTATE TRENDS[2]

B.C. residential sales dollar volumes are down 9.4% to $40.8 billion year-to-date (July 2025), compared with the same period in 2024. Residential unit sales are down 5.7% year-over-year at 42,895 units, while the average MLS® residential price is also down 3.9% to $952,323.

Generally, real estate sales and transactions trend higher in the summer months and can be expected to increase as tariff uncertainties fade. Transactions and sale volumes regularly reach annual highs during the months of April to October. The overall number of real estate sales transactions in the Okanagan has been trending upwards since July 2024, increasing by 10%. While the residential average price in the Okanagan has declined 4.1% from $777,754 in July 2024 to $746,230 in July 2025. Minimal fluctuations in year-over-year pricing may suggest a stabilizing market.

3.3 BACKGROUND REVIEW

3.3.1 PLANNING AND REGULATORY REVIEW

To understand the District's current policy and regulatory framework, Urban Systems reviewed key municipal documents that influence the District's development approval processes. Documents reviewed include:

- Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw No. 1227 (2024)
- Fees Bylaw No. 987 (2016)
- Housing Needs Report (2023)
- Interim Housing Needs Report (2024)
- Official Community Plan (2018-2038) Bylaw No. 1065 (2018)
- Preliminary Layout Review Policy No. 209 (2024)
- Professional Reports & Technical Studies Terms of Reference Policy No. 186 (2021)
- Secondary and Accessory Suite Policy No. 104 (2009)
- Strata Corporation Dissolution Policy No. 165 (2018)
- Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw No. 1121 (2020)
- Zoning Bylaw No. 561 (2007)

Strategic Documents and Reports

The Strategic Plan, OCP, and Housing Needs Report are three key documents outlining strategic direction and analysis findings that relate to the District's development approvals process as a whole.

Council's Strategic Priorities 2024-2026

Created as part of the District of Lake Country's strategic planning process, this framework identifies action items and priorities for Council. It also includes the following vision and mission statement:

> **Vision:**

> "*Lake Country, living the Okanagan way. Embracing our histories and nurturing our future.*"

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[2] B.C. Real Estate Association (August 2025)

Mission:

"*We serve to nurture a healthy natural environment, strong rural character and urban core, sustainable infrastructure, economic opportunities, an inclusive community with involved citizens, through respectful, transparent government, focused on balanced strategic decision-making.*"

The five pillars of the District's vision and mission include:

- **Infrastructure –** Well-maintained infrastructure and facilities like fire protection, wastewater, water, and transportation that meet the needs of a growing community.
- **Environment and Climate Action –** Maintaining a healthy natural environment through incentive-based change, watershed stewardship and approaches to build resiliency.
- **Economic Prosperity –** Building a strong and vibrant community by diversifying the tax base, promoting Downtown's economy, and expanding agriculture and tourism.
- **Governance –** Ensuring effective governance by centering community input, maintaining transparency, expanding intergovernmental relationships, and advocating for District priorities.
- **Community –** Building a complete community that promotes a high quality of life by providing housing options, adequate health care, access to recreation amenities and protective services.

An ongoing objective of Council's governance priority includes the identification and support for improvements to the development process which is directly related to this DAP review.

District of Lake Country Official Community Plan

The OCP sets the overall framework for community development, including land use planning, parks and recreation, arts and culture, mobility networking, and infrastructure servicing within the District. The document provides strategic guidance (goals, objectives, and policies) for Council and staff in departments throughout the organization. The document is a product of public engagement, including visioning, consultation, and dialogue: the OCP belongs to the entire community, including residents and stakeholders.

An OCP update was undertaken in 2024, as a part of the initial phases of the Review to streamline approvals. This update expanded the list of exemption criteria and consolidated the number of Development Permit Areas as an interim step in improving development application processes.

As of January 2025, the District began the process of updating its OCP. The project is in its first phase: Background and Visioning. The updated OCP is anticipated to be ready for Council's consideration of formal adoption in July 2026.

The District's OCP update is intended to build on the existing OCP with a focus on the following:

1. Review and evaluate existing policies and guidelines (for example, urban containment boundaries, future land use designations, Development Permit Areas);

2. Update the OCP to include the specific policy documents created since 2018 (for example, Water Master Plan, Liquid Waste Management Plan, and Transportation Master Plan);

3. Fill information gaps with data generated through updated population demographic projections, housing needs assessments, and land capacity analyses;

4. Include new priorities into the District's strategic policy fabric (for example, Council's 2025 strategic priorities); and

5. Monitor progress towards the updated policy guidance.

It's important to note that District staff have concurrently initiated an OCP amendment in the short-term to comply with Bill 44 legislation. The Bill 44 update of the OCP will be limited to ensuring that the 20-year need for housing can be accommodated by the future land use designations supporting residential housing and including housing policies for each class of housing need described in the District's 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report.

District of Lake Country's Housing Needs Report

Council adopted the District's 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report on December 17, 2024. This Interim Housing Needs Report supplements the 2023 Housing Needs Report. The Interim Report estimates housing need along the housing continuum using a new standardized method. As noted above, the District is required to review and update the OCP to ensure that the 20-year need for housing can be accommodated in the community. The next regular Housing Needs Report update will be required by 2028, and subsequently in five-year intervals.

The Interim Housing Needs Report was required to include three new, additional items:

- The number of housing units required to meet current and anticipated need for the next 5 and 20 years, as calculated using the HNR Method provided in the Regulation;
- A statement about the need for housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transportation; and
- A description of the actions taken by the local government, since receiving the most recent Housing Needs Report, to reduce housing needs

The District was also required to provide the total number of housing units needed over 5- and 20-years to address the following six housing classes. These housing classes are also required to be incorporated into the OCP to promote the delivery of each housing class.

- Extreme Core Housing Need
- Persons Experiencing Homelessness
- Suppressed Household Formation
- Anticipated Growth
- Rental Vancy Rate Adjustment Additional Local Demand

The Council Strategic Plan, OCP, and Housing Needs Report all identify important, often interwoven goals that can be better achieved through an improved development approvals process. For example, diversifying housing stock and increasing the supply of available housing across the community will contribute to goals outlined in both the Strategic Plan and OCP, as well as address the challenges identified in the Housing Needs Report.

Similarly, another example is the relationship between ensuring focused growth and achieving the goals outlined in the District's OCP; directing growth efficiently can support the utilization of vacant and under-utilized housing parcels identified in the Housing Needs Report which in turn supports community vibrancy.

3.3.2 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT/ACTIVITY

A densification trend has been occurring in Lake Country and has resulted in an increase in multi-unit dwellings, aligning with regional planning goals and population growth. Between 2011 and 2016, approximately 600 housing units were built, compared to 2016 to 2021 where approximately 980

housing units were built.[3] Since that time, an additional 666 housing units have been approved between 2022 and Q2 of 2025.[4]

Despite these increases, Lake Country's housing stock has limited diversity with 66% of housing units comprising single-detached dwellings.[5] However, recent years have seen a rise in multi-unit housing, expanding the range of housing options for young families, seniors, couples, and single-person households. The following tables summarize development application trends in the District from 2020 to Q2 of 2025. While total building permit volumes have declined since 2021, there has been a notable increase in planning applications in the first half of 2025, which may indicate future growth in construction activity.

Table 1. Building Permit Application Issuance[6]

Building Permits	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (Q1 & Q2)
Single-detached Dwelling	93	94	45	27	28	10
Multi-Unit Dwelling*	23	6	6	23	9	1
Commercial	13	18	14	0	3	2
Industrial	1	0	0	1	2	0
Total Applications	331	363	260	190	223	123
Total Value of Construction	$115,549,640	$92,075,742	$68,646,841	$110,141,281	$110,482,995	$39,841,033

*Note: Multi-unit dwelling permits represent the number of permits issued rather than the number of units constructed. One multi-unit dwelling permit may consist of two or more units.

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[3] Housing Needs Report 2023
[4] BC Stats Release Building Permits (BPER) August 2025
[5] Housing Needs Report 2023
[6] District of Lake Country Annual Report 2022, 2023, and 2024

Table 2. Planning Applications Administered[7]

Planning Applications	2023	2024	2025 (Q1 & Q2)
Total Applications (Received/Resolved)	52/57	31/32	50/53

The District receives a steady volume of development applications, driven by significant population growth in recent years. Complex development applications are routinely submitted. Digital tracking of planning applications was only formalized in 2023 with the adoption of Tempest software, as such only recent data was compiled for this report.

The building permit data suggests a shift away from single-detached dwellings towards multi-unit dwellings is occurring. Although multi-unit permits are fewer in number, they represent larger and denser housing projects which tend to be more complex, involving land use applications like rezoning and Development Permits, engineering, numerous building inspections and cross-coordination between departments. This trend is expected to continue, as an aging population and rising housing costs drive demand for more affordable and diverse housing, including "missing middle" housing.

The following statistics[8] help illustrate some of these trends:

- Between 2016 and 2021, Lake Country's population grew at 4.4% annually, significantly higher than the provincial average of 1.5%.
- It is estimated that Lake Country will experience demand for an additional 1,485 net new housing units by 2026, and approximately 5,162 net new housing units by 2041.
- The median household after-tax income in 2020 was $87,000, exceeding both regional ($75,500) and provincial ($76,000) medians.
- Despite relatively higher incomes, affordability challenges persist. As of 2021, 21% of Lake Country households in core housing need paid more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.

The current development environment is influenced by a range of interrelated pressures, including:

- Housing pressures, which include a shortage of housing stock and increases to housing costs;
- Increase in development activity;
- Escalating land values;
- Increasing quantity, complexity, and sophistication of development applications;
- Rising costs of infrastructure requirements;
- Possible infrastructure constraints and unknowns;
- Limited staff capacity and staffing deficiencies;
- Environmentally sensitive or hazardous lands; and,
- Applicants with various levels of development experience.

This wide range of development factors may potentially affect municipal staff across departments and may grow more severe if pressure from these factors increase over time. Pressure may also start to arise

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[7] District of Lake Country Annual Report 2023 and 2024
[8] Interim Housing Needs Report 2024

from the development community, which will desire increased certainty and efficiency with respect to timelines and outcomes.

Notably, increases in development activity and the consequent challenges arising from such an increase is not a phenomenon unique to the District of Lake Country. Communities across British Columbia are facing similar challenges related to development application reviews and overarching community pressures, like housing affordability and climate change impacts and considerations.

3.3.3 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

The District has seven main departments: Corporate Services; Engineering and Environmental Services; Finance and Administration; Parks, Recreation and Culture; Planning and Development Services; Protection Services; and Utilities. Each department has its own Director or Managers (Public Works, Planning and Development Services) as needed. Recent organization changes have resulted in new Director positions for both Engineering and Development Approvals, with other organizational shifts and staffing changes within these divisions.

The Development Approvals Department has 17 staff across three divisions: Planning, Current Planning and Building Inspection (including Bylaw Services and Business Licensing). Reflecting the steady increase in both population growth and development activity, the District's staff capacity has been increased to meet the expanded demand for local government services. It should be noted that of the 6 positions which are directly related in day-to-day processing of planning applications, 4 positions are new within the last 18 months.

3.3.4 APPLICATION MATERIALS AND PROCESS

The District currently provides only a limited selection of publicly available planning resources, which may present challenges for applicants, especially those unfamiliar with local development approval processes (this is discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of this report). Existing materials include eight (8) application forms and eleven (11) information guides. Of the eleven (11) guides, eight (8) are checklists related to the different Development Permit types.

Information about each form is summarized in **Table 3** below:

Table 3. The District's Development Approvals Forms

Form	Description
Agent Authorization Form	Allows the registered owner(s) of a property to designate an agent to act on their behalf with regards to a development application or other purposes.
Agricultural Land Reserve Application Form	An application for Agricultural Land Reserve is necessary when adding, removing or subdividing land within the Agricultural Land Reserve, accommodating non-farm use of agricultural lands, placing of fill and secondary dwelling for farm purposes, as examples.
Development or Variance Permit Application Form	A development permit is required prior to the subdivision or development (i.e., construction, alteration or addition of a building) within the following development permit areas: • Agricultural • Commercial • Industrial

	• Multiple Unit Residential • Natural Environment • Stability Erosion and Drainage Hazard • Town Centre • Wildland Fire To vary the provisions of a Zoning Bylaw, servicing requirements, signage regulations and certain other provisions.
General Permit Application Form	The general application form should be used for the following application types: • Board of Variance • Covenant Amendment • Development Permit Exemption • Liquor Licensing Permit • Property Status Letter • Sign Permit • Soil Removal / Deposit Permit • Temporary Use Permit
Liquor Licence Application Form	When an application to the Liquor & Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) requires local government comment, the applicant must make application directly to the District of Lake Country to initiate the review process. The District is required to gather public input and submit a Council resolution to the LCRB within 90 days.
Official Community Plan Amendment Application Form	To change any of the policies outlined in the OCP—in other words, to change the vision approved by Council—an OCP amendment is required.
Subdivision Application Form	A subdivision application is required to divide a titled parcel of land for the purpose of re-zoning, developing / re-developing and/or selling each individual parcel separately.
Zoning Amendment Application Form	To amend or change zoning on a particular parcel, requires a Zoning Amendment Application be submitted for consideration.

Information about each guide is summarized in Error! Reference source not found.**4** below:

Table 4. The District's Development Approval Guides

Form	Description
Development Permit Application Guidelines / Checklists	Each of the following development permit areas has its on specific application checklist related to the guidelines outlined in the OCP and Zoning Bylaw regulations: • Agricultural • Commercial • Industrial • Multiple Unit Residential • Natural Environment • Stability Erosion and Drainage Hazard • Town Centre

	• Wildland Fire
Contaminated Site Disclosure Statement Information Bulletin	Information on the local government's requirement to screen for contaminated sites and the triggers requiring submission of a Contaminated Site Disclosure.
Liquor Licence Application Guide	Outlines the application process between the Liquor & Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) and local governments. Provides applicants with a checklist of items required at the time of submission.
2025 Planning Fees Information Bulletin	Details on the 2025 Planning Fees in accordance with Fees Bylaw 987, 2016. There are some discrepancies between the values shown here and the Fees Bylaw, due to the 2% annual increase over the past 9 years, rounded up to the nearest ten dollars ($10).

The absence of more comprehensive application guides, zoning interpretation resources, and detailed process flowcharts can result in confusion, delays, and increased reliance on staff for clarification. As development activity becomes more complex and applicant diversity increases, improving the accessibility, clarity, and completeness of planning-related information will be essential to support a more efficient and transparent development approval process.

3.3.5 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION PROCESSING SOFTWARE

To understand the current framework and flow of information applicable to development approval processes, past reports on the District's current software and management systems were reviewed and discussed in engagement sessions with District staff. These sources of information provide an overview of the current use of the systems and technology in place and their capacity to complete additional functions.

The current information technology and systems in place across District departments are described below:

- **Tempest Prospero** is the internal permitting module that allows staff to process development applications and permits. Tempest Prospero is heavily used for application processing and filing of documentation, with the District's development application process (for planning applications) being paperless for the most part.

- **Tempest MyCity** provides web-based access to property tax, utilities and business licence account information.

- **Escribe** is an agenda and meeting management tool used by the District's Corporate Services department to streamline the creation, distribution, and management of meeting agendas for Council and committee meetings.

Following completion of the DAP, District staff are exploring further improvements to Tempest Prospero, alongside development of a more sophisticated digital application submission tool. These additional tools can help to support efficiency in application intake and processing but are not a replacement for staff oversight and review of application components.

3.3.6 DEVELOPMENT FEES

Lake Country's Development fees and charges are generally consistent when compared to other municipalities in the Okanagan region. A comparative review of municipalities indicates that Lake Country's fees are near the average in most cases, but lower than City of Kelowna in all categories except rezoning applicatoins . The most notable difference is in OCP Amendments fees where Lake Country charges 50-63% less than Kelowna ($4,575) and Penticton ($6,315), respectively. Overall, Lake Country provides a balanced fee structure with clear inclusions for public hearings and advertising costs, reflecting reasonable costs for developers and applicants.
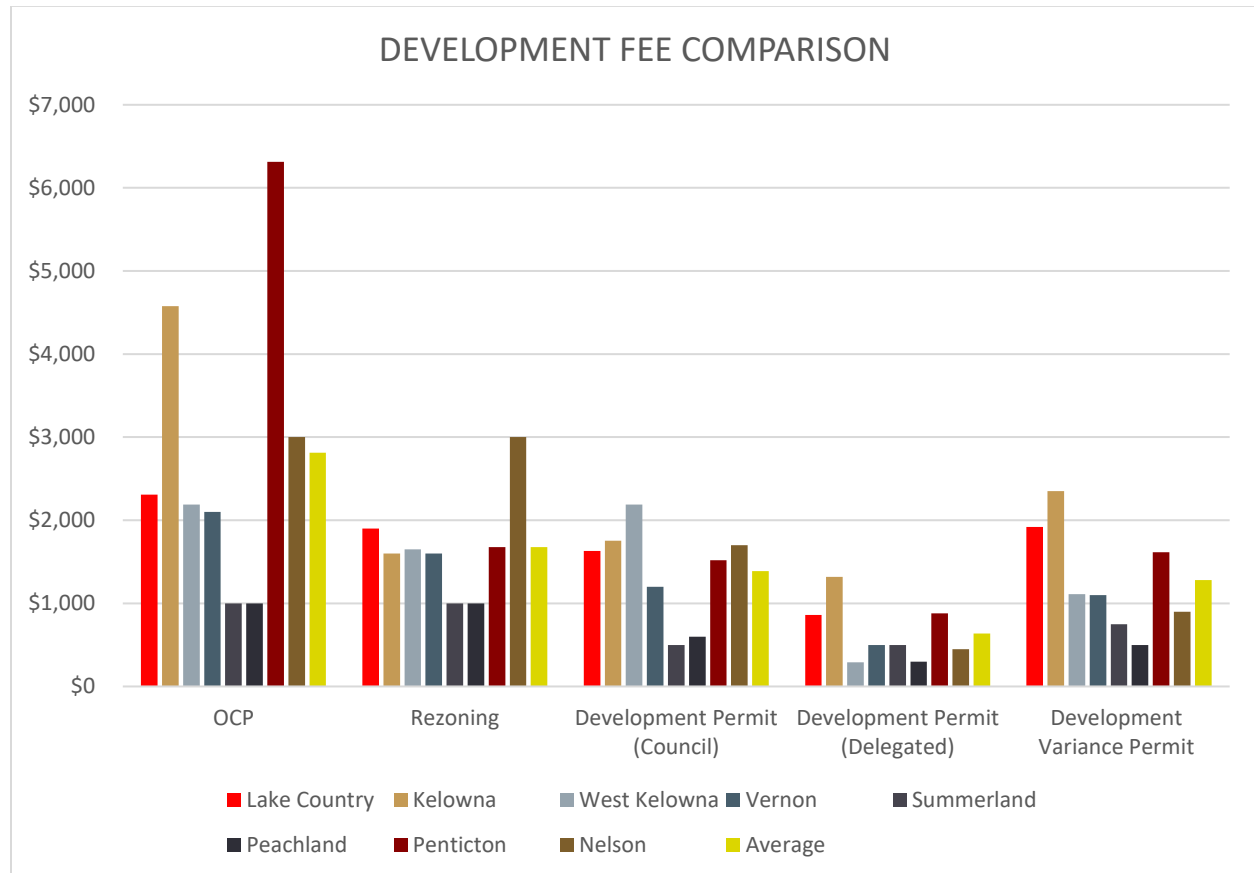
Beyond these development fees for key application types, additional components such as Development Cost Charges (DCCs), subdivision and servicing fees, and other permitting costs also play a significant role in the overall development approval process. DCCs for example can vary widely between jurisdictions and is a key mechanism by which local governments invest in the infrastructure, services and amenities needed to support new development.

As part of ongoing efforts to improve service delivery, Lake Country continues to work with the development community to find a balance between improved processing times and the need for increased application and permit fees to cover the costs of additional staffing and resources. Overall, Lake Country's fee structure reflects reasonable and predictable costs for developers, while supporting sustainable community growth. There may be opportunity to increase some fees if there is desire to match with neighbouring Kelowna.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS: OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

To understand current development application processing practices within the District and find opportunities to consider streamlining improvements, Urban Systems undertook two primary avenues of research: 1.) numerous in person conversations with District staff across multiple departments involved in development application review and 2.) an in-depth review of existing policies, bylaws, and supporting development application materials. This also included a scan of website content and some recent Council Reports.

Conversations with staff were approached with an appreciative inquiry[9] framing by focusing specifically on what worked well within the process and what steps would normally be taken during application review, when there were identifiable milestones and timelines within the process that could serve as benchmarks for timing and sequencing, and what supporting documentation and templates were used. During conversations, Urban Systems considered whether all information needed was available or considered, how integration with other departments occurred, how and when referral processes occurred, and the nature of cross-departmental collaboration. The review also examined how application materials and requirements were communicated to applicants at key milestones.

Input was gathered from 9 separate one-on-one conversations with District Staff and two department-based workshops, each involving 3 staff members. A total of 13 staff participated. In all cases, staff provided feedback on their experiences in accepting and reviewing development applications and their roles within development approvals. The interviews and workshops covered the entire planning application process, starting from pre-application inquiries through to application submission, and progressing through referrals, analysis, council report writing, and application completion. Discussions considered common planning application types, such as Rezonings, Development Permits, and Development Variance Permits and their related considerations. The interviews involved representatives from the following departments/divisions:

- Planning and Development Services
- Building Services (Front Counter staff)
- Development Engineering
- Corporate Services

Unlike many other UBCM funded DAPR projects that have been conducted throughout the Province, the District of Lake Country's process did not include interviews with members of the development community. This was due to knowing already that development approval processes were needing refinement/streamlining as well as a desire to direct project budget and resources towards improved documentation. There are already existing communication channels and regular check-ins between the District and the development community at large that provide opportunities for their feedback. In

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[9] Appreciative Inquiry engages individuals in change management processes by focusing on what works well, rather than what is not working.

large part, across the Province as noted in the 2019 Provincial DAPR Report, the development community seeks consistency and predictability of process and as such these objectives were factored into the work.

A Report to Council with an overview of Phase 3 of the project, alongside a presentation, was provided to Mayor and Council at a Committee of the Whole Meeting in May 2025. This was intended to provide the opportunity to understand what Council is hearing from applicants and the public about the District's development approvals process. Council moved to receive the report but no feedback was received following this presentation.

This review process provided valuable insight into the development application and approvals process in the District as well as the underlying bylaws and policies that frame these current practices. Several insights emerged; while District staff have made some significant and impactful changes to process, coinciding with new staffing and management positions, there remain opportunities for additional streamlining.

The following subsections outline the major themes resulting from the staff conversations and policy review. It provides contextual discussion surrounding these themes and identifies where there are opportunities for improvement as they pertain to either processes, supporting documentation, or underlying policy. Some of the best practices identified in **Section 4.0** from other municipalities are interwoven with suggested recommendations and discussion. A concise summary of all recommendations stemming from discussion in this section and the review underpinning the previous Best Practices section can be found in **Section 6.0**.

4.2 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION PROCESSES

Generally speaking, the District's application review steps are well established and already in alignment with Provincial best practices. Processes are documented in detailed flowchart graphics that are available to all staff. Furthermore, the District's Tempest/Prospero software is utilized to manage applications and track applications, with detailed tasks assigned to the different major steps of application review processes. The District understands the importance of communication and is already taking internal measures to bolster the quality of communication materials and ensure that the public and applicants have ready access information.

While supporting practices for these identified applications steps are in place, they do not always reflect the realities of a growing organization, recently created new staffing positions, legislative changes, new management structures, and emerging best practices observed in other communities and DAPR projects. Several opportunities for continuous improvement were identified.

Broadly speaking however there is no need within the District for any fundamental alteration of application review processes, nor are there glaring omissions of best practices that might be expected to be incorporated. Many best practices are already in place, such as pre-application meetings, refusal of incomplete applications, convening of Development Review (CORE) team meetings, issuance of comprehensive review letters, use of tracking software, and the use of process flowcharts.

There are, rather, numerous opportunities to increase processing efficiency and decrease overall application timelines by:

- more clearly outlining application requirements to prevent incomplete application submissions,
- clarifying and solidifying application intake procedures, including file assignment and preliminary review,

- better establishing and defining discrete application sequences and timelines associated with each,

- Improving upon the common interdepartmental understanding of application steps and discrete departmental requirements,

- Establishing 'stage-gates' at key points in the application process, to ensure that necessary input is received, to avoid work proceeding prior to all required input or considerations;

- Clarifying individual's roles and responsibilities to all involved across the organization,

- Improving collaboration across planning, engineering and building,

- Establishing defined and more strict timelines for Council Report referrals, agenda setting, and submission deadlines; and

- Improving application review resource documentation for staff.

These improvements, while simple, can be expected to significantly improve efficiency across interdepartmental communications and application review processes. District staff involved in the process are very receptive to new ways of streamlining, clarifying, reducing delays, and collaborating with each other. It is important to note that staff spoke about a positive workplace culture, and there was a general observation of positive working relationships amongst staff.

Internal Communications and Referrals

Communications across departments and between individuals are frequent throughout application processes, as is typical and necessary for effective application review. DAPR focused conversations with staff however revealed an opportunity to better the effectiveness of communication by improving on the shared understanding of roles and responsibilities across all individuals and departments involved within the planning application process.

For example, conversations with staff often reflected an uncertainty about who might be responsible for specific tasks, and sometimes an uncertainty from one department about when a task that involves shared responsibility needs to be completed in another department. The consequences of this are not severe in terms of the quality of application review or results of recommendations to Council, but would typically result in extended timelines and inefficiencies in the use of staff (and potentially applicant) time.

While planning applications are received, managed and processed by Planning Department staff, the review of development proposals involves input and expertise from multiple departments across the District. Not only is there a need for a shared understanding of process, but for a shared understanding of the responsibilities and needed contribution of each person and department. It should be noted that this type of uncertainty is a natural consequence of staffing turnover and experienced staff in a small organization, as well as a consequence of rapid population growth and introduction of additional application complexity, and it is not the fault of any individuals involved in the process.

Staff did express mixed feelings and differing views about the effectiveness of inter-departmental communications as it relates to application review efficiency. Overall, staff generally agreed that better communication throughout the development application review process is necessary to streamline workflows, referrals, and improved upon a shared understanding of different departments and individuals responsibilities throughout the application process.

Several opportunities to improve communication and improve the efficiency of the referral process alongside clarification of roles and responsibilities were identified. Some of these are detailed further in below subsections and the best practices section. Others include:

- Clarify application intake and file assignment processes for front counter staff and ensure all staff are aware of roles, responsibilities and timeliness associated with the file intake and assignment (to a planner/file manager) process.

- Increased training for all front counter staff (across building, planning and engineering departments), including guidance on application requirements and how to field basic public inquiries surrounding planning processes, to both support improved customer service and shared understanding of processes and requirements.

- Staff noted that there is room for communication improvement between the Building Team, Engineering Team and the Planning Team within the Development Services department, notably for requirements and sequencing of Technical Development Permits with Building Permits.

- Staff further noted opportunities for better integration of customer service roles between the Planning, Engineering and Building teams.

- Establishment of timing expectations for key application components (discussed below), particularly surrounding application intake, referral send-out and responses, and Council Report review.

- Creation of documented Standard Operating Procedures which detail roles and responsibilities and individual application steps.

- Simplified public guidance materials including flow-chart graphics for planning processes which can also be used for internal education of planning processes.

- Improvements surrounding understanding of when Council reports are initiated, referred, and how this leads to establishment of an anticipated Council date.

- Creation of a simplified Engineering Referral Response Letter (that accompanies the typical and longer engineering Referral Response). This 'short form' referral response can be useful to help planners understand and discuss engineering requirements, and can later be used as a succinct and more efficient way to accompany Council Reports and communicate engineering requirements to Council.

- Interdepartmental report referrals require a more structured process and turnaround timeline.

Development Review "CORE" Team

Municipalities can often work in "silo" environments which can be detrimental to inter-departmental communication. Development Review Team meetings are a common approach among local governments to integrate cross-departmental input on development application reviews. In the District, Development Review meetings, also known as "CORE" Team meetings, occur bi-weekly for regular application review unless no new applications were received. CORE meetings typically happen in advance of referrals being circulated amongst departments to preview forthcoming referrals.

Several staff expressed mixed feelings about the effectiveness of CORE meetings. While they can encourage group discussion and help staff adapt a problem-solving mindset and provide an opportunity to address technical development application items, the District's current CORE team setup does not appear to be facilitating this. Reasons include:

- Some believe it is challenging to have meaningful conversations during the meetings as most of the material is new and they have not seen it yet.

- Others felt that the CORE meetings would be more meaningful if attendees had more time to review the file being presented.
- Some felt that CORE meetings resulted in a sharing of opinions more than a statement of objective review.
- The CORE Team meeting process, in advance of the typical 4-week referral process, is adding approximately 2 – 3 weeks of additional time onto application review.
- CORE Team meetings currently have an invite list of over 20 people, including numerous managers and senior level staff.

It is recommended that new parameters are created around the scheduling of CORE meetings – adjusting the timing to be after the referrals are sent out, and reducing the number of participating staff to only those who are directly involved in application review processes – approximately 4 – 8 persons for typical applications. It is further recommended to scale back the number of applications that are discussed at CORE meetings, bringing only complex applications. If is anticipated by planning staff that the referrals process can sufficiently provide opportunity for interdepartmental feedback, then a CORE team meeting is not necessary. Other departments receiving referrals can still request an interdepartmental meeting as necessary.

Reducing the volume of applications brought to CORE meetings, and a reducing the number of people in attendance will reduce the burden on staff time. Further, by reducing the size of the meeting this will hopefully encourage more open and informal discussion surrounding application specifics. More regular in-person meetings between representative file managers from planning and engineering departments can help support improved collaboration and coordination. The 'walk down the hallway' approach to collaboration is encouraged as it supports continued efforts to improve upon the shared understanding of the different requirements of each respective profession and their associated policies and bylaws. Additionally, by not having senior managers attend these meetings, in addition to freeing up resources, it is anticipated that more junior staff and assigned file managers will become both more empowered and accountable to drive issues within individual applications towards a solution.

During the file assignment process, senior managers have the opportunity to review and flag more complex applications that are likely to warrant senior management involvement.

Application Timing: Benchmarks and Level of Service Targets

Conversations with staff, across different roles and departments, also yielded repeated feedback about the uncertainty of the timing of processes, including when actions should be taken (such as initiation of a referral process) and what the expectation should be for how long it should take (such as a waiting period for a response). This reflected that there is a need to develop an organization-wide standard for timing surrounding discrete steps of application processing.

There are many factors that contribute to approval timelines. The District and Council needs to recognize that review and processing timeframes can be greatly impacted by the responsiveness of applicants to provide required information, or the time required to satisfy conditions of approval and secure project financing. Delays in application processing are often the fault of applicant delay, by either not submitting quality materials or disregarding requests from staff to incorporate changes.

This presents a need to establish key timing benchmarks throughout the application process for steps that are within the District's control (such as turnaround time for responses to complete submissions). This will help balance expectations for communication protocols. It will also lead to an ability to establish timing benchmarks that can be used to set expectations with the development community and with Council.

To be clear, benchmarks are not primarily intended to be a performance metric, but rather an establishment of 'normal' to gauge progress and communicate expectations. As mentioned, planning applications can vary significantly in their complexity, and delays are often outside of the control of staff, being created by applicants themselves or from external agencies and organizations. Establishing agreed upon turnaround times for referrals, deadlines for report submissions, and turnaround times for communication with applicants are a processing efficiency and customer service primarily, and secondarily can serve as a metric for staffing needs and customer service.

Staff agreed in conversations that established timing protocols would benefit processes and also indicated that this would assist in improving upon the overall organization-wide shared understanding of application steps and expectations.

Establishing realistic and clear benchmarks or targeted processing timelines and level of service expectations for applicants is considered a best practice for streamlining the development review process. When establishing targets for key development application milestones, it is important to identify benchmarks in the process that are within the District's control. Examples of timeline targets that could be considered include the following benchmarks:

1. Provide applicant a summary of application requirements after a pre-application meeting;

2. Establish a timeline to send out external agency and internal referral comments from date of complete application submission;

3. Schedule a date for an application review team meeting at the end of the referral period;

4. Establish a timeline to provide applicant comprehensive review letter; and,

5. Determine a target date to get application before Council for consideration or delegated approval by staff. Note that consideration of this timing cannot be undertaken during development applications until a complete application is received and all responses to a comprehensive letter are resolved. Any correspondence with applicants, the public, and the development community should note this caveat.

It is recommended that the District establish timeline targets for key milestones in the development review process and monitor the success of reaching these targets. The existing Tempest-Prospero software can be used to generate and monitor such targets once a longer history of application processing history is input and patterns resulting from established processes and changes detailed here are established.

Documentation of Standard Operating Procedures

The District does not currently have written documentation of application processing procedures. Where there are, documents are significantly out of date. While discrete actions, tasks and accompanying checklists have been incorporated in the Tempest-Prospero software (which remains important), this platform lacks the nuance of contextual information or nuanced explanation, details on timing, and other factors that might be considered.

As a result, it is recommended that procedures manuals are created for standard application review processes and for any other processes that are standardized and common. This is recommended for the following items, at minimum:

- Pre-Application Meetings
- Application Intake and Assignment
- Rezonings and OCP Amendments
- Development Permits and Development Variance Permits

- Public Notification Processes

While documentation of operating procedures is generally not necessary for more experienced planners, and would not directly impact the public or planning outcomes, documentation of standard operating procedures can support training of new roles, improve cross-departmental understanding of responsibilities and processes, and improve application processing efficiency and consistency overall.

Some of the District's historical application review capacity challenges stem from recent staff turnover. In particular, staff identified the challenges associated with losing significant organizational knowledge. Standard Operating Procedures function as a means of succession planning should it be necessary, and they also reduce the burden on senior staff for onboarding processes. It was interpreted from conversations with staff that incorporation of workflow diagrams and role-specific charts within Standard Operating Procedure manuals would support departmental consistency. Standard Operating Procedures are discussed further in the Best Practices section below.

Metrics, and Monitoring and Application Status

The District started reporting on application volumes in its Annual Report in 2023. This is coupled with initiation of the use of Tempest-Prospero, an application management and task-tracking software. Continuing the use of annual monitoring of application volumes, along with an internal tracking of application timelines as discussed, will help inform whether staffing volumes are maintained at an appropriate level to maintain a desired level of service.

This process of monitoring also allows for establishing fact-based reasonable and realistic timeframes for application timing (and/or stages of an application) that can be communicated to the public and Council. This is often something that the development community requests and/or benefits from, as it allows them to plan effectively for their project timelines and associated necessary considerations (such as carrying costs, lender requirements, and scheduling of contractors).

Communications (External)

A consistent volume of daily inquiries are fielded at the front counter in the Development Services Department. As the District is relatively small, by comparison to nearby municipalities, staffing roles for Development Services staff comprise multiple duties that involve both answering public inquiries and managing file processing duties. This can make it challenging to maintain the desired level of customer service to the public, while also maintaining a level of service and attention towards application processing.

Staff emphasized there is a lack of guidance materials available to the public, both in terms of general planning information, application specific information, and application processes that could help alleviate this challenge. Educational materials for applicants may not always replace in-person visits or phone call inquiries, but physical and digital guides on common issues (suite legalization, development variance permits, rezoning, etc.) would be valuable to avoid a member of the public needing to visit City Hall or phone in to the department the department.

In terms of staffing capacity to manage applications and maintain communication with the public, staff noted the time burden of effectively communicating the development process to potential applicants and responding to basic and repetitive inquiries. With new staff recently hired, process improvements underway, and efforts focused on reducing the backlog of older planning files, it is premature to assess whether staffing resources and capacity are affecting processing efficiency or timelines.

It is recommended that, alongside tracking application timelines, the District also monitor the volume of inquiries and the time senior planning staff spend responding to them. In the future, it may be

warranted that additional front-counter staff, with previous experience, be considered to reduce the burden on existing staffing resources and ensure that desired levels of customer service and responsiveness can be maintained.

In terms of communicating planning requirements, staff further noted:

- There are repeated counter inquiries about common and simple planning issues (such as 'what is a Development Permit and when is it required') that could be addressed with improved online information resources.

- Application forms and application requirements are outdated and lacking clarity for applicants who are not familiar with planning processes or technical planning submissions. Several amendments to the current development application forms are recommended to provide additional clarity to the development application process, namely, to remove unnecessary technical information from the application forms and create PDF forms that can be digitally completed. Continuing updates to the application forms will need to be made in the future to reflect updated bylaws, and other related procedural requirements that the District may make following completion of this project.

- During the engagement process, staff highlighted the importance of increased training for front-end staff to reduce miscommunication between departments and the public. In particularly, cross training of front-counter staff would reduce the number of staff necessary to respond to inquiries, improve a shared understanding of processes, and by consequence improve customer service. It is therefore recommended to implement specific training for front-end District staff that are answering inquiries for development applications and receiving submission packages.

- While Comprehensive Review Letters are currently in use, there is no standard template for content. It is recommended that a standard Comprehensive Review Letter Template be developed and be incorporated into use to improve consistency in communication and help ensure that components of review are not overlooked.

- It was noted by staff and through Urban Systems review that there are no planning related website resources for the public. It is recommended that the District invest in a review of website resources and undertake measures to expand website information services and content.

Lastly, despite the above, it was noted that the District currently shares application statistics and statuses with the public on its website using Microsoft Excel, which is updated approximately once a week. This practice is time-consuming and reliant on multiple persons for each update, is prone to errors or missing information, and does not use available technology features in the Tempest-Prospero software.

To support application status tracking, monitoring application targets, and the volume of applications, it is recommended to explore utilization of custom reporting tools available in Tempest-Prospero which could automate this system and ensure accuracy and current information and reduce staff burden. Monthly and year-to-date stats would be appropriate. This information could be used to better define and monitor service targets, enabling a more fulsome understanding of timelines and capacity.

Pre-Application Meetings

District staff currently facilitate pre-application meetings with applicants prior to submitting an application and staff have a reasonably well-established process to do so. While encouraged, these pre-

application meetings are not currently a requirement. Formalizing pre-application meetings could allow other departments to engage with development proposals early in the application process to identify any major concerns, application requirements, and information servicing requirements. While the ability to provide advisory comments at this early stage of the process is limited as a complete application has yet to be submitted, providing strategic direction and policy insights early in the process can save significant time for both staff and applicants later on.

To reduce the number of incomplete applications, it is suggested that for complex applications a pre-application is made mandatory prior to the submission of a development application. This requirement can be discretionary and established by staff. Parameters of what constitutes 'complex' will vary from case to case. Involving Development Engineering and Building staff, establishing a preliminary understanding of engineering requirements and their impact on planning concerns and future building processes early in the inquiry process will help determine the necessity of a pre-application meeting.

It is further recommended that the District's planning application forms and website clearly outline the parameters for a pre-application meeting. In addition, it is recommended that staff ensure to distinguish to potential applicants the expected level of information that would be provided from a pre-application meeting (formal follow-up) and a response to a simple development inquiry (either verbal response or simple email answer). It is at this point that a determination for a pre-application would be made, following a cursory review of the question being asked.

No fee is currently charged for pre-application meetings. Many municipalities charge a fee for pre-application meetings, while others provide one complimentary pre-application meeting and charge applicants for any subsequent meetings. The District may wish to explore pre-application and subsequent meeting fees further if they find it to be too resource intensive or if applicants begin to abuse the opportunity for information. It is important to balance the demands on staff time that a pre-application meeting requires with the necessity of pre-application meetings (they are not necessary for all planning applications). Effectively communicating planning processes via public guides (as discussed) is one method to avoid unnecessary pre-application meetings for simple but unavoidable applications.

To further reduce incomplete submissions, it is recommended that the practice of providing a follow-up pre-application letter and/or checklist to the applicant following the pre-application meeting continue to occur. This applies additional rigor to the application intake process. The letter and/or checklist should summarize the application requirements applicable to the scope of the development application and provide advisory comments for consideration, as discussed in the pre-application meeting. The application should then be reviewed against the pre-application requirements checklist before accepting the application.

Incomplete Applications

The submission of incomplete applications is a pressing issue for the District, as it has been for many other municipalities. Staff indicated that many development applications received are incomplete and are frequently of poor quality and lacking important contextual information about development proposals.

This is a significant challenge as it results in an inefficient process whereby staff must follow-up, often multiple times, to ensure a complete application before the review process can begin. The timing between application intake and staff review will increase due to incomplete applications, resulting in the perception of lost time by the development community while waiting for news on their submission.

Currently, application forms and fees are received in hard copy form at the front desk of the Municipal Hall, and other related application content is submitted digitally. Staff acknowledged the burden of navigating multiple file submissions without fully understanding the content, of a lack of naming convention for submitted files, and the time associated with this should an application be incomplete. It is understood that the District is currently exploring development of a digital application submission program, and it is recommended that this continue to be pursued.

If an application is missing a baseline of required components, it is recommended that the application not be received by the District until it is complete. This practice is underway but could be procedurally improved with application forms, submission checklists, and pre-application meeting follow-up letters. This practice becomes critical should the District begin to communicate level of service benchmarks and timelines, and becomes further critical should the District move to a digital application submission platform. While those applicants with incomplete submissions may not be in favour of this practice, more experienced developers throughout B.C. acknowledge this as a best practice and recognize the inefficiencies associated with incomplete applications.

Discussions will often and still need to occur to determine what constitutes a "complete" application for some complex proposals. Additional training and support for front counter staff on how to review individual application submissions for completeness, filtering out applications that are incomplete, and turning away incomplete applications may be beneficial. It is recommended that the District consider discussing with neighbouring municipalities the opportunity to share experienced front counter resources to support training, in the absence of more senior front counter planning support staff at the District for this specific application process.

Preventing the submission of applications that are missing critical components will help streamline the review process for staff and minimize the need for back-and-forth communication with applicants. The District and Council should see this as a customer service improvement and one of the most important activities associated with development approvals processes.

Public Notification Processes and Requirements

Public participation is an important component of application processes, but it is resource intensive. As result it is necessary to balance the need for public input with the need for streamlined application review and understand that formalized public input is not necessary for all application types. Ensuring that transparency remains in place through notification procedures, meeting minimum legislative requirements, and requiring addition notification and consultation will help build trust with the community and Council in the application process.

The District currently employs several measures to facilitate public participation, which are generally consistent with best practices. A few opportunities exist to lessen administrative workload and improve process efficiency in the application process.

Staff identified that certain application processes create unnecessary burden, particularly the current requirement for staff to manage applicant signage installation. Urban Systems review found opportunities to reduce staff time by shifting aspects of signage preparation to applicants. Under this approach, applicants would prepare a 'digital proof' of proposed signage content and confirm this with staff. Following staff's approval, it would be the Applicant's responsibility to have the sign printed and installed by a professional signage company. This shifts the burden of installation to the applicant rather than relying on staff to print and assemble signs and coordinate install with the applicant.

The requirement for installation of signage is currently required, as per the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw, a minimum of 10 days prior to public hearing or Council consideration, and is

required to include Public Hearing information. The timing of signage install comes at a critical and busy time in the application review process for planners, while they are preparing to attend Council. It is recommended to require installation of signage earlier in the application process, closer to application submissions and referrals. This provides the following benefits: increases public awareness of the application earlier in the process, allows for the sign to remain in place for the duration of the application process, allows more time for the public to gain awareness, and reduces the risk of signage install being missed or done incorrect during tight Council timing requirements. It is also recommended to remove the requirement to include Public Hearing details directly on the sign and make these available via the District's website, consistent with current public notice practices, using digital (i.e. QR code) technology. Lastly, it is recommended to standardize signage templates with a clearer format and include the applicant's contact information for the public.

It is also recommended to consider, via amendments to the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw, to remove the requirement for signage for all development applications <u>except</u> OCP Amendments and Zoning Amendments. This would remove signage requirements for Phased Development Agreements, Temporary Use Permits, and Development Variance Permits. The former two are generally too complicated to describe on signage, generally already require consistency with the OCP, and are not well understood by the public. The latter, Development Variance Permits, typically would only impact immediate surrounding properties. Mail-outs to surrounding properties provides sufficient notice to those impacted the most. This is a further change that can simplify application processes and reduce burden on both applicants and staff while not impact public trust in the process or planning outcomes. For clarity, this would mean the Development Notice Signs would only be required for OCP Amendments, Zoning Bylaw Amendments (both with and without Public Hearings).

4.3 BYLAW, POLICY, PLAN UPDATES

Staff indicated that updating District planning-related bylaws would help streamline the approvals process. The Zoning Bylaw (No. 561) was particularly referenced as being outdated and in need of review. Clarity of requirements in the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw (No. 1121) were also referenced. Although these Bylaws were not reviewed as part of the DAPR project, it is recommended that, given this feedback, a review of them be undertaken.

In the meantime, there are also opportunities for the District to consider auditing historical Development Variance Permit Applications to understand the nature of variances and where amendments to the Zoning Bylaw could be made which could reduce the demand on staff resources for commonly requested variances that have a high rate of Council approval.

Staff also noted challenges with the vagueness of policy wording in the current OCP and the difficulty that this creates in communicating policy interpretation and application review results to applicants. The current Official Community Plan is under review. Amendments to Development Permit Areas were made in 2024 as an interim measure to improve OCP legibility and implementation and reduce application burden. It is recommended that any future OCP Design Guidelines be developed to be concise and non-redundant, with clearly defined objectives and corresponding guidelines, and that checklists for Development Permit compliance be created concurrently.

The Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw was repealed and replaced in 2024, however several items within that Bylaw warrant consideration of further amendments, which would support a more streamlined application process (some of these are also discussed in the previous subsection titled "Public Notification Processes"). Those include:

- A refinement of base information for applications that reflects updates to application forms made as part of this project;

- Inclusion of a specific requirement for submission of a "Description and Planning Rationale" for OCP Amendments, Rezonings, Development Variance Permits, and Development Permits.

- Requirements for a Summary Report by Applicants following the holding of a Public Information Meeting;

- Update Table 1 which references requirements for Newspaper Ads to reflect the recently adopted "Alternative Means of Public Notice Bylaw" No. 1293;

- Remove the requirement for a Notice Sign for Development Variance Permits;

- Consider a reduction of the buffer distance for Development Variance Permits as noted in this report. 30 -50 metres would capture adjacent properties plus one or two;

- Consideration for inclusion of a definition for 'substantial construction' be included to improve clarity of enforcement of expiry of Development Permits;

As noted in the Best Practice section, there is currently limited delegation to staff for approval of Development Permits, and no delegation for Development Variance Permits. These are best practices that provides opportunity to streamline and shorten the application review process and are a recommendation emerging from this review.

4.4 OVERALL SUMMARY

Alongside the District's strengths in customer service, teamwork, and carrying high-volume workloads, the above analysis highlighted the District's positive workplace culture and existing established application processes, many of which already incorporate numerous well-established best practices in alignment with Provincial DAPR report findings.

Since there are many recommendations, it is important to note the importance of prioritization—implementing certain improvements (e.g., those related to reducing timelines and minimizing Council involvement where possible) will ultimately facilitate solving others (e.g., delays in application timelines and staffing resources). Establishing consistent process is also critical to addressing identified process challenges, particularly within areas of staff training, interdepartmental communication, and internal/external communication.

This report highlights the need to incorporate greater clarity and consistency into the development approvals process. Staff conversations identified a need to define roles and responsibilities for each of the District's departments and, particularly those that contribute to the review of development applications, as a means to improve inter-departmental understanding and communication. Improving predictability, providing ongoing staff training, fostering collaboration, and establishing clear expectations for application timelines will help build staff confidence, retention, and professional resilience. This, in turn, can strengthen Council's trust in staff and the application review process. Ideally, this will streamline Council's review of applications, ensuring that details best addressed during staff review are not debated in Council chambers, where context and expertise may be limited. It is also anticipated that this would provide Council with the comfort to expand delegated decision-making authority to staff.

Clarity also extends to the importance of establishing key milestones throughout the development application and review process: important benchmarks include pre-application meetings, pre-application letters, Development Review (CORE) Team meetings, and clear comprehensive letters. Similarly, another notable recommendation is to use online and printed educational materials to

provide clear communication and consistent expectations with regards to application processes, requirements, and timelines.

Updating policies to align with best practices and provincial legislative changes, such as modifications to delegated authority and public hearings, are also recommended improvements that will strengthen and shorten the District's approvals process. Where possible, drawing from best practices in other municipalities, along with some of the recommendations suggested by staff, will help the District address a lot of critical improvements and challenges. Additionally, using these best practices will help with strengthening what the District already does well.

5.0 BEST PRACTICES

Building upon similar work completed in other municipalities on other projects, the following section provides a summary of broad "best practices" related to Development Approvals Processes. While the previous section focuses mostly on process that involve the day-to-day activities of staff and reflect specific aspects of the District's processing procedures, this section speaks to underlying bylaws and policies that are legislatively the responsibility of Council.

This section incorporates approaches that other local governments have taken to implement changes in recent years resulting from DAPR funded projects as well as the practices of other municipalities throughout the Province. The best practices referenced largely relate to three key topics:

1. Development Approvals Procedures

2. Internal Procedures

3. Application Process

	In addition to incorporating practices from other municipalities and the Provincial DAPR Report, this section has been informed by a review of existing District bylaws, review of the District's planning processes, and informed by conversations with staff.
☑ (red)	Red checkmarks indicate DAPR Best Practices that are not implemented in the District of Lake Country.
☑ (orange)	Orange Check Marks indicate that the Best Practice is partially implemented, but there is opportunity for additional changes to maximize benefit.
☑ (green)	Green checkmarks indicate Best Practices that are already implemented.
☑ (grey)	Grey checkmarks indicate Best Practices to consider, but these topics that were not reviewed as part of the District's DAPR project
	While a brief assessment of the state of the Best Practice is provided by the check-box colour, based on the project teams observations through policy review and staff conersatoins, a detailed analysis of each Practice area has not been undertaken. This section is intended to provide context of these Best Practices that have been observed in other communities more than it is intended to assess particular practices within the District.
	For some of the Best Practices, a brief amount of context is provided for the checkmark colour, where details are available or context is necessary. A detailed list of recommendations specific to the District of Lake Country that arise out of this Best Practice Review, are contained in **Section 6.0**.

5.1 DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS PROCEDURES

5.1.1 DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES BYLAW

As per s.460 of the *Local Government Act*, local governments are required to define procedures for amendments to the OCP or Zoning Bylaw and for the issuance of permits. Local governments typically define procedures for processing development permits, development variance permits, temporary use permits, and OCP/Zoning Bylaw amendments through a Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw.

Challenges

Across the Province, local governments and the development community have experienced the following challenges with their current Development Approvals Procedure Bylaws:

- Development Application Procedures often vary from one municipality to another, which makes development application submissions challenging for developers who work in multiple municipalities. There is an opportunity to harmonize procedures between neighbouring communities where applicable by following common best practices.

- Redundant (e.g., overlapping policies between Development Approvals Bylaw and Delegation Bylaw), irrelevant policies (e.g. internal procedures) and/or contradictory processes and policies between departments will create confusion for applicants as well as staff who must administratively maintain and cross-reference policies across multiple bylaws.

☑ Review the current Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw to clearly outline practices and benchmarks, clarify development information requirements and application procedures, and possibly consolidate redundant bylaws.

☑ Ensure a clear distinction, as well as consistency, between the procedures within the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw and internal procedures that staff follow to process development applications. Procedures outlined in the bylaw are legally enforceable whereas internal procedures are not.

The District of Lake Country recently made significant amendments to the Development Procedures Bylaw via a a complete repeal and replace. Further addressing any process changes resulting from this Development Approvals Process review would ensure that the above and below Best Practices are pursued to the furthest extent that is possible.

The sections below describe specific best practices for various components of the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw, some of which have not yet been incorporated.

5.1.2 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Delegation of Authority is an opportunity for Council to delegate its powers, duties, and functions to a Council member, a Council committee, an office or employee, or to another body established by Council in order to focus on broader and longer-term needs of the municipality. The *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act* outline the scope and limitations of the delegation of power to ensure Councils remain accountable to the public for its decisions. Historically, and up until recent legislation changes (described below), all development applications were approved by Council except for some types of applications such as those for minor development permits.

The District of Lake Country Council has already made significant steps to delegate technical Development Permits to staff, which has resulted in streamlined approvals for those particular application times. The below section identifies where there are further opportunities to expand upon this delegation.

Challenges

Local governments have identified through broader provincial DAPR processes the following challenges with approval of all development applications by elected officials:

- Applications requiring approval by elected officials generally increase overall approval timeframes, particularly when there are requirements for public notification and long lead times for Council report preparation, referral, review, and agenda finalization.

- Elected official approval may lead to uncertainty where projects meet required criteria outlined in municipal bylaws and policies but are not approved due to subjective requirements from Council. This has cascading impacts on District priorities, including adding time, complexity and cost to the delivery of housing.

- Redundancy where applications are aligned with the OCP, approved area plans, and/or development permit area guidelines but applications require site specific accommodations. Planning policies and documents are often, by design, generalized to account for representing large areas of the municipality.

- Cases of elected officials making decisions on development applications based on details that are not supposed to be considered either due to pressure from the public or lack of understanding about the parameters of evaluation (e.g., making a decision on the intended users of a proposed development instead of the intended use).

Delegated Minor Development Variance Permits (DVPs)

Legislative Changes

As of November 25, 2021, s.498.1 was added to the *Local Government Act* to enable local governments to delegate decisions on Development Variance Permits (DVPs) to staff, where the proposed variance is minor and relates to:

- the siting, size, and dimensions of buildings, structures, and permitted uses;

- off-street parking and loading spaces;

- signs; and/or;

- screening and landscaping for natural environmental benefits.

Local governments that choose to implement this power are required to delegate such authority to staff by bylaw. The bylaw must also outline:

1. Criteria for determining whether a proposed variance is minor in nature; and

2. Guidelines that staff must consider in deciding whether to issue a DVP.

It is important to establish the comfort level of the local government when considering an increased scope of staff authority for DP and DVP approval. Delegation of powers can be expanded or retracted by a bylaw amendment and can be phased in over time, taking an incremental approach to implementation. Council can also establish a right of reconsideration in the bylaw which allows staff or applicants to choose to "opt out" – sending variance requests to Council for consideration to ensure fairness and political accountability (e.g., when a delegated person makes decisions that will impact individuals or property rights).

The intent of the legislative revision is to provide local governments more autonomy to simplify and speed up the decision-making process for development approvals when technical DVP decisions could be reasonably made by staff.

Identify expanded scope of delegated Council authority to staff for Development Variance Permits as per recent amendments to the *Local Government Act*.

Establish criteria within the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw for determining when proposed variances are minor in nature, as per recent amendments to the *Local Government Act*.

Common criteria include:

- The variance would have no significant negative impact on the use of nearby and adjacent properties.

- Degree or scope of the variance is not significant.

- The proposed variance is consistent with the purpose and intent of the zone.

- The proposed variance is consistent with the character of nearby development.

- There is a valid reason for the variance request.

Establish guidelines within the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw that the delegate must consider in deciding whether to issue a Development Variance Permit, as per recent amendments to the *Local Government Act*.

Municipalities have taken one of two approaches to delegating minor variances to staff for approval. The first approach is based on broader principles in the development of criteria and guidelines where 'minor' is defined by a suite of land use planning considerations.

Common broader principled guidelines include:

- The proposed variance addresses a physical or legal constraint associated with the site (e.g., unusual parcel shape, topographical feature, statutory right-of-way, etc.).

- If strict compliance with the zoning regulation would be unreasonable or un-necessary.

- If the proposed variance would unduly impact the character of the streetscape.

- The proposal provides a community/environmental benefit and/or supports a Council priority.

The second approach is very specific and typically based on 'minor' being defined as a certain percentage or limit to varying a specific regulation. Local governments have outlined specific guidelines, such as:

- The proposed variance does not reduce the required number of parking stalls.

- The proposed development will not vary maximum permitted parcel coverage by greater than 10%.

- Any proposed variance to the height of buildings must be for less than 10% of the roof area or 10% or less of the allowed height.

Delegated Development Permits (DPs)

S.490 of the *Local Government Act* provides staff the authority to approve Development Permits (DPs), which is already reflected in most local government Development Procedures Bylaws. A DP is a permit that specifies how development is to occur on a given parcel of land in accordance with related Development Permit Area guidelines. DPs are a non-discretionary approving authority, meaning that both the local government and the applicant are bound to adhere to the established development permit guidelines in the OCP. The most appropriate place for the delegation of authority in relation to approving land use applications is consolidated within the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw.

☑ Clarify and expand scope of delegated Council authority to staff for Development Permits.

Powers of Council delegated to staff for issuing Development Permits are outlined in Development Procedures Bylaws and typically include:

- Requiring security as a condition of issuing a temporary use permit or land use permit;

- Designating the form of any permit;

- Designating the form and content of application forms;

- Creating, amending, and prescribing graphic design templates for development application notice signs;

- Issuing or amending DPs where only minor variances are requested; and,

- Renewal of unchanged, lapsed permits.

Table 5 outlines how nearby local governments have defined the scope of delegated authority for issuing and amending DPs within their Development Approvals Procedure Bylaws. It is noted that neighbouring communities of Kelowna and Vernon both have much more extensive delegation of Development Permit and Development Variance Permit approvals to staff.

Table 5. Scope of Delegated Authority to Staff to Issue or Amend Development Permits

City of Kelowna	City of Vernon	City of West Kelowna
Form and Character DPs (non-residential use) Form and Character DPs (intensive residential) only within the Sensitive Infill Development Permit Area Farm Protection DPs Natural Environment and Hazardous Conditions DPs where no variances to the Zoning Bylaw are required.	Issuing, amending or cancelling all Development Permit applications. Minor Variance Permit that varies the following: · Building on slopes of 30% or greater · Lot width within Development Districts 1 & 2 · Site and surface coverage · Height of primary and secondary buildings · Front, side, and rear setbacks	Commercial DPs with certain restrictions. Industrial DPs with certain restrictions. Multi-unit and Intensive Residential DP to a max of three storeys and floor area of 1400 square metres. Hillside, Aquatic Ecosystem, Sensitive Terrestrial Ecosystem, and Wildlife Interface DPs where a QEP Report addresses requirements and/or protection measures.

	· Screening and landscaping · The provisions of Sign Bylaw 4489	Renew DPs and Minor DPs that do not have any proposed changes. Minor Variance Permit that varies: · The provisions of the Sign Bylaw · Parcel coverage · Height of buildings and structures · Floor area of buildings and structures · Setbacks · Off-street parking/loading · Screening and landscaping

5.1.3 PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings allow affected citizens to provide their views to elected officials on planning matters. When required, Public hearings must be held after first reading and before third reading of a bylaw.

Challenges

There are challenges associated with public hearings, namely:

- The format of a public hearing does not allow for discussion. Councils may not respond to public comments, which can cause frustration.

- Public hearings occur late in the development approvals process, after considerable time and costs have been invested into a proposed project. Consequently, change can be difficult to accommodate at this stage.

- Public hearings tend to attract and empower well-organized interest groups that may not represent the broader perspective of the community, which can result in applications being denied despite being aligned with community plans.

Legislative Changes

As of November 25, 2021, the *Local Government Act* removed the default requirement for local governments to hold public hearings for Zoning Bylaw amendments that are consistent with the OCP (Bill 26). The intent of this legislative revision is to reduce processing timelines and resources to coordinate and organize the public hearings that may not provide value to a Zoning Bylaw amendment application process if the application is already in alignment with the OCP.

> ✓ Remove the default requirement for public hearings in the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw, as per recent amendments to the *Local Government Act*.

In most cases, local governments have removed the default public hearing requirement from their Procedures Bylaw for Zoning Bylaw amendments consistent with the OCP but have added the option for Council to facilitate a public hearing prior to third reading of the amending bylaw. However, in 2023 further legislative changes to the *Local Government Act* came into effect outright prohibiting public hearings for Zoning Bylaw amendments for housing projects that are consistent with the OCP (Bill 44).

Earlier opportunities for public input are not required in legislation; however, many local governments have created their own processes for meaningful public engagement earlier in the process. Similarly, while there are no requirements for proponents to engage with the public at any point in the process, many choose to do so.

> ✓ Establish requirements for applicants to hold Public Information Meetings prior to Council's first reading of an amending bylaw to provide the public an opportunity to access information and to inquire about the proposal.

Some local governments have included Public Information Meetings (PIM) as a requirement, some encourage PIMs, and others may require a PIM, if applicable. The District requires Public Information meetings for OCP amendments and Phased Development agreements, which is an appropriate use of this tool.

5.1.4 PUBLIC NOTICE

The *Community Charter* and *Local Government Act* require local governments to provide advance public notice to inform the public of opportunities to participate in local government decision-making and share views (e.g., public information meetings, elections, public hearings, disposition of land). The Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw outlines notification requirements for Development Variance Permits, OCP, and Zoning Bylaw amendments.

Challenges
Local governments experience challenges notifying the community of upcoming public engagement opportunities, for example:

- Local governments, especially regional districts, generally encompass large areas with a diverse mix of rural and urban needs which may make it challenging to find methods of public notice that will reach everyone.

- With modern communication methods evolving, publishing public notices in the newspaper is no longer practical.

Legislative Changes
As of February 28, 2022, S.94 of the *Community Charter* was amended to enable local governments to determine alternative methods for public notice requirements. The public notice requirements provide local governments with two options:

1. Continue to use the default publication requirements of publishing in a newspaper once each week for two consecutive weeks; or

2. Adopt a bylaw to provide for alternative methods of publication (i.e., a public notice bylaw), which:

    a. Specifies at least two methods of notice (e.g., newspaper and local government website), not including the public notice posting places; and

    b. Considers the principles of effective public notice (reliable, suitable, and accessible) described by the Public Notice Regulation.

The intent of the legislative revision is to allow local governments to choose to incorporate alternative means of public notice if publication by newspaper is no longer practical, so the public consistently knows where to find public notices in the community. If a local government has not adopted a public notice bylaw to provide for alternative methods of publication, the default publication requirements apply.

> Revise public notice requirements for public hearings and public information meetings to support open and transparent communication and to ensure the community is informed of current development applications.

The District has just adopted an alternative means of public notice bylaw, which now provides the opportunity to post public hearing information online rather than in print. This is a leading edge best practice and an example of process streamlining that takes advantage of technology while maximizing staffing resources.

5.1.5 COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Local governments often refer applications to advisory planning committees for additional policy review. These advisory committees can include general planning groups such as an advisory planning commission or advisory design panel, or groups that specialize in specific focus areas such as heritage committees, accessibility committees, economic development committees, homelessness and affordable housing committees, and others.

Challenges

Advisory Committees aim to provide a community-driven approach to planning. Despite this benefit these committees have their challenges, for example:

- Advisory Committees consume a large portion of staff resources to prepare reports, agendas, and meeting minutes.

- Advisory Committees are not always the most appropriate place for reviewing development permits, temporary use permits, and development variance permits, as the intent of these committees to aid local governments in achieving their higher-level planning goals is often lost in the review of an application's details.

> Eliminate or consolidate advisory planning committees or establish terms of reference that focus on long range planning initiatives versus the review of development applications that are in alignment with the OCP.

The District currently only has one advisory committee, The Agricultural Advisory Committee, which reviews development applications related to agricultural lands.

5.2 INTERNAL PROCEDURES

Internal procedures refer to the steps followed by staff to review and process all development application submissions. It includes all processes required for efficient intake, good customer service, and communication between internal departments and Council. Internal procedures should be documented clearly and consistently in all communication tools, software, manuals, flowcharts, onboarding, and training documentation to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of local government bylaws, policies, and procedures, and can apply them during the review of all types of development applications. Internal procedures documentation is intended only for use by staff and Council.

Challenges
Local governments experience many common challenges internally regarding development approval procedures, including:

- High demands and limited staff resources, resulting in insufficient capacity to meet the desired level of service.

- Incomplete or poor-quality applications, resulting in the need to guide applicants through requirements and processes, which increases application process times.

- Significant organizational knowledge lost as a result of any staff turnover.

- Finding and retaining qualified planning staff in addition to significant onboarding demands for new staff and consultants.

- Lack of standardization in development procedures, approaches to filing, communication, and interpretation of policies and regulations results in gaps and inconsistencies in available information and records management.

- Using staff resources to process commonly approved variances.

- Contradictory advice from different departments.

5.2.1 PROCEDURES MANUALS

Development Procedures Manuals are internal documents that are used to help staff review and process development applications for various types of permits, subdivision applications, and bylaw amendments. A procedures manual allows for a consistent process by detailing the steps staff must follow during application review, from pre-application meetings with prospective applicants to issuance of permits. These manuals also allow for succession planning and support with training of new staff.

 Create internal procedures manuals that outline internal policy, procedures, templates, flowcharts, and application checklists to ensure process consistency and improve effectiveness of onboarding new staff or third-party consultants.

Procedures manuals are discussed in the Section 4.0 and are also incorporated into the recommendations, and are anticipated to be produced as an outcome of the Development Approvals Process.

5.2.2 INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

There is a need for staff across departments to communicate, understand, and balance requirements administered through development approval processes. Development Review Team meetings are a common approach to integrate cross-departmental input on development application reviews. They are intended to address technical development application items, anticipate development impacts and requirements, provide updates, share information, and discuss inter-departmental referrals.

Interdepartmental meetings can quickly become burdensome and shift from objective application evaluation to subjective opinion if too many people are involved, or the department of those in attendance is not directly involved or carries relevant subject matter expertise. It is important to calibrate attendance based on the specifics of the application and ensure staff in attendance have sufficient knowledge and experience to identify and discuss appropriate items.

Establish Development Review Team meetings where relevant department representatives can discuss and clarify application specifics, provide advisory comments on an application that identifies any conditions that must be satisfied prior to the permit/application being approved.

The District currently employs a "CORE" team meeting to review development applications. Recommendations to improve upon the existing Development Review ('CORE') team meetings are incorporated into **Section 4.0 and Section 6.0**.

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5.2.3 APPLICATION STATISTICS AND STATUS TRACKING

Application tracking procedures include application status tracking, monitoring application targets, and the volume of applications. This information can be used to better define and monitor service targets, enabling a more complete understanding of timelines and capacity, as well as illustrate demands for additional staffing. Tracking information can also be used for keeping records of inquiries and applicant interactions to create consistency when staff are advising on development application requirements. It should be noted that establishing consistent use of application management software (such as Tempest/Prospero) through the entire development application process is a necessary precursor to being able to effective track statistics.

Implement a digital permit tracking system and consistent tracking procedures for use by all departments involved in approvals to enable application statistics tracking and reporting.

Recommendations for application tracking and benchmarking are discussed in **Section 4.0 and Section 6.0**.

5.2.4 REDUCING COMMON VARIANCES

A Development Variance Permit (DVP) is a permit issued by local governments that modifies land-use bylaw regulations to account for special circumstances. Common variance requests typically relate to setbacks, height or dimensions of buildings, parking regulations, screening provisions, sign regulations, frontage requirements, and servicing. It may be appropriate for local governments to update their Zoning Bylaws, Subdivision Servicing Bylaws, or other bylaws to reduce common development variance permit applications and to ensure that land use regulations align with current planning policy.

Volume of DVP Applications 2020 - 2025
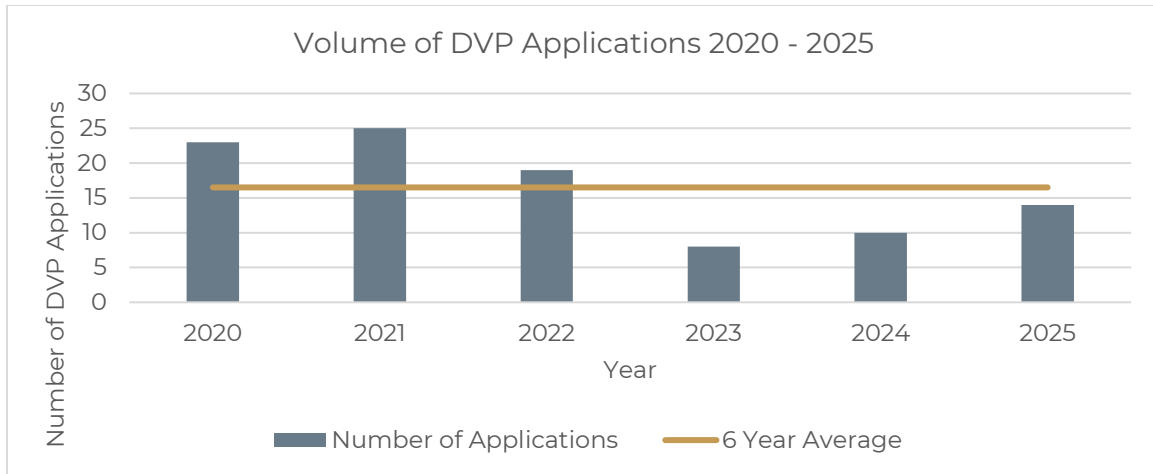
☑ Review and amend appropriate bylaws to reduce common variances.

The District experiences a significant volume of DVP applications relative to the total number of planning applications; annually 30% of all planning applications are Development Variance Permits. This will consume significant staffing resources across multiple departments and also result in considerable work to bring these applications to Council. A recommendation to audit historical DVP applications, review the Zoning Bylaw for opportunities to amend, and proceed with Zoning Bylaw amendments where feasible is included in **Section 6.0**.

5.2.5 CORPORATE RECORDS

Effective corporate records management is vital to streamlining the development approvals process. Policies for corporate records management are useful for streamlining development application intake and for guiding staff in consistency and efficiently handling development application information.

[Note that these practices were not reviewed as part of the District's Development Approvals Process. As such, no status has been provided in reference to the check-mark colour].

☑ Implement a corporate records management system for digital files and scans of physical files.

☑ Establish a file management policy to clarify processes related to electronic and paper filing (e.g. file naming protocols and procedures for scanning records).

☑ Establish file close-out procedures that clearly outline conditions of approval and track requirements and consideration for subsequent approvals.

5.3 APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process refers to the applicants' experience in submitting and seeking approval for development applications. The application process requires an application form, an understanding of development requirements, and clear resources and communication from staff to support applicants throughout the process. Public facing materials that support the application process can include application forms, comprehensive letters, application status updates, and reference information such as guides, bulletins, and webpages. Clear, simple, and easily accessible communication materials are important to ensure complete and high-quality application submissions.

Challenges

Some of the challenges that proponents experience throughout the development application process, include:

- Increased complexity of application requirements;

- Inconsistent development permit guidelines between neighbouring municipalities;

- Lengthy application processes;

- Lack of transparency on the status of development applications to the applicant from the local government; and

- Lack of consistency in application requirements between adjacent local governments.

5.3.1 APPLICATION INTAKE

Application intake requires the applicant to complete a development application form and submit any required documents. Application forms indicate the information required to consider an application to be complete, which can include identification of existing and proposed uses, associated fees due, appearances before staff and/or Council, variance requests and other information, such as reports, plans, and drawings. Submissions are often completed through an online submission system or receipt of hard copy documents at the front counter.

 Acceptance of only complete applications. Local governments can only begin processing applications when they have been submitted with all required documentation as detailed on the application form/checklist. By ensuring all required documentation is submitted correctly and completely early in the process, significant time can be saved for both staff and applicants later on.

District staff currently have a review process and will not accept incomplete applications. There are opportunities to improve and clarify this process, as is detailed in **Section 5.0**.

5.3.2 PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS

A pre-application meeting is typically an informal meeting between a prospective applicant and the file manager prior to the application intake, which provides applicants an opportunity to connect with staff to review the application process, requirements, timelines, and fees. Pre-application meetings are important for establishing a collaborative relationship between the prospective applicant and staff, communicating application requirements and responsibilities early to applicants, collecting information, and addressing questions. It is also an opportunity for staff to make applicants aware of any initial concerns that may impact their application or development (e.g., infrastructure capacity, frontage improvements).

Encourage pre-application meetings between applicant, file manager and other necessary staff (usually Development Engineering or Building) to review the application requirements and expected processing timelines based on defined level of service targets. Be clear that a pre-application meeting is not considered to be an application submission.

Provide applicants with a pre-application letter and/or checklist following the pre-application meeting to apply additional rigor to the application intake process. The letter and/or checklist should outline the requirements relevant to the applicant's development application as discussed in the pre-application meeting. Applicants must comply with the application requirements checklist to qualify as a complete application submission at the time of application intake.

Pre-application meetings are a current practice. There are opportunities to improve the process as is discussed and detailed in **Section 5.0** (Discussion) and **Section 6.0** (Recommendations).

5.3.3 COMMUNICATION

Communications can get very complex if there are numerous players representing an application, and as a result, place demands on limited staff resources that could be better used elsewhere in the process.

Require a single point of contact representing the property owner(s) for each application to simplify communication between the local government staff and the applicant or their agent.

Require a single point of contact from the District for each application to not only simplify communication between staff and the applicant or their agent, but between internal staff as well.

The District currently assigns a file manager to each project following the application intake. There is opportunity to reinforce the single point of contact approach via the initial application acknowledgement letter.

The exception to the rule for the single-point of contact involves inclusion of a representative from Development Engineering. It is crucial that whenever a representative from Development Engineering is involved in communication, that key message is discussed between planning and engineering in advance of being sent to the applicant, and that the planning file manager is copied on correspondence.

5.3.4 REFERENCE MATERIALS

Publicly available reference materials are important tools to support applicants throughout the development application review process. Reference materials should be provided for prospective applicants in the form of guides, brochures, bulletins, and/or checklists that outline information regarding processes, roles and responsibilities, timelines, expectations, and all required documentation. Materials need to be consistent with Council policies, internal development procedures manuals, and the Development Procedures Bylaw.

In addition, many local governments have online planning "portals" that share property information, zoning, permits and licensing information, applicable bylaws, and other helpful information on a GIS web viewer (business directories, trail maps, utilities, street maps, flood plains, etc.). This is a useful tool

that allows the public to access information about properties that can help to confirm regulatory compliance.

All development application materials should be easily accessible and searchable online.

Create or update application reference guides and checklists to clearly outline application processes and components of the process that often lead to staff inquiries for clarification.

Create a centralized online location for hosting GIS, and asset mapping tools, as well as all development application materials including forms, guides, and checklists, to ensure ease of access for applicants.

Common reference materials include:

- Pre-application Meeting Guide;

- Pre-application Checklist (DP, DVP, OCP amendments);

- Development Permit and Development Variance Permits Guide;

- OCP and Zoning Bylaw Amendment Guide;

- Temporary Use Permit Guide; and,

- Subdivision Application Guide.

Many of these materials are being developed as an output of this program and will be made available in print and digital forms at the completion of this project.

5.3.5 COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW LETTERS

A comprehensive review letter is provided by the file manager to the applicant following the staff and agency review and referral process. The letter details any outstanding requirements, anticipated conditions, and issues that may arise at future stages of the development approval process. This allows the applicant to have the full picture of what to expect in the development process to avoid unexpected changes in project budgets or proformas.

Develop a Comprehensive Review Letter following the Development Team Review meeting that summarizes all recommendations and feedback from external agencies that outline preliminary development conditions or requirements to the applicant.

The District currently issues Comprehensive Review Letters for applications. There are opportunities to improve upon the clarity of content and develop a more robust template to ensure that items are not missed and that the District is taking a consistent approach to its communications at this key stage of the application process.

5.3.6 NOTICE OF APPLICATION SIGNAGE

Under S.541 of the *Local Government Act,* all owners and tenants adjacent to land subject to a development application must be given notice of the application and the time and date when the application will be heard by Council. Notice of application signs are intended to notify community

members that would fall outside of the notification boundary distance. Provisions for development application public notice signage must be included in the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw.

Outline public notification signage requirements and responsibilities of applicants and provide applicants with the appropriate resources to create and print notice of application signs.

Local governments are commonly providing branded sign template options to applicants, with the onus on the applicant to develop the sign content, print, and post the sign. Notice of application signs are trending towards more colourful, simplified, and informative signs with graphics.

The District currently has signage policies in place, however these can be bettered to both improve transparency with the public and reduce administrative burden. This is discussed further in **Section 5.0**.

6.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The above described review has identified several action items for the District's consideration that aim to improve development approvals processes. These actions have been summarized in this section into a concise list of recommended actions. These recommendations have been strategically prioritized based on immediate need, grant scope, and ease of use and implementation in the near term. This section groups the recommended action items into the following categories:

The checkmarks indicate actions that are being implemented as part of the scope of the Development Approvals Process Review

No checkmark represents actions that were not within the scope of the Development Approvals Process Review or require ongoing effort but are still recommended to be undertaken when possible.

Action No.	Recommended Action	Status
	External Communication Materials	
1A	**Revise Application Forms and Checklists** • Update application forms for clarity, removing unnecessary technical information and include the ability for forms to be digitally fillable. • Update the Owner's Authorization Form to clarify that applicants/agents are responsible for communicating or forwarding application information to relevant stakeholders, owners, and consultants. • Update application checklists to clarify documentation and report requirements, establish bare minimum submission components for all applications, and improve overall clarity for applicants and District staff.	✓
1B	**Develop Application Guides** • Develop accessible public guidance materials for both digital and print, covering general planning information, application-specific details, and common applications (e.g., Development Variance Permits, rezoning, Development Permits) to reduce in-person and phone inquiries. • Support guidance materials with process flowcharts to improve clarity, accessibility, and efficiency in the development approval process	✓

Action No.	Recommended Action	Status
	Processing Improvements	
2A	**Reinforce Application Timing and Sequencing** • Develop preliminary level of service targets for timing of stages of application review that are within staff control, such as application intake, initial review, referral response, detailed review and analysis, and issuance of comprehensive review letters, as a means to improve processing efficiency and benchmark individual application steps. • Establish realistic timeline targets for key milestones in the development review process and monitor progress in meeting them. • Use Tempest/Prospero software to track and report on application timelines once sufficient history and process patterns are established.	☑

2B	**Document Standard Operating Procedures**
	
	• Develop/update written procedures manuals for standard application review processes. Incorporate workflow diagrams and role-specific charts within SOP manuals to improve clarity and consistency across departments and support staff training and succession planning. Include the following processes at minimum:
	    o Pre-application meetings.
	    o Application intake and assignment.
	    o Rezoning and OCP amendments.
	    o Development Permits and Development Variance Permits.
	    o Public notification processes
		☑

2C	**Strengthen Pre-Application Meeting Processes** • Consider requiring mandatory pre-application meetings for complex applications to reduce incomplete submissions and ensure early engagement from all relevant departments, particularly engineering and building. • Clearly outline on the District's website and application forms the purpose, scope, and expected outcomes of pre-application meetings versus simple development inquiries. • Ensure potential applicants are provided a detailed application requirement letter or checklist following pre-application meetings to ensure completeness at submission and strengthen the application intake process. Incorporate new processes to ensure filing and tracking of pre-application meetings.	☐

2D	**Improve Application Intake Process** • Provide targeted training for front-end staff across Planning, Building, and Engineering, including application requirements and handling basic public inquiries. • Clarify application intake and file assignment processes for front-counter staff, ensuring all staff understand roles, responsibilities, and timelines. • Reinforce that that only complete applications will be accepted; applications missing baseline required components will not be accepted until complete. • Improve application forms, submission checklists, and pre-application meeting follow-up letters to support completeness and reduce back-and-forth with applicants.	✓
2E	**Improve Council Report Scheduling Protocols for Council Agendas** • Establish clear timing expectations for key application components related to preparation of Council Reports, including advance estimating of Council agenda dates, interdepartmental report referrals, and Manager/Director/CAO review. • Incorporate approval chain set up in eScribe with submission deadlines and reviewer deadlines associated to each Council meeting date.	✓
2F	**Development Notification Signs** • Shift aspects of signage preparation to applicants to reduce staff workload. • Require signage installation earlier in the application process, closer to submission and referrals. • Remove specific Public Hearing details from signage and provide links to the Public Notices Section on the District's website (using digital tools e.g., QR codes) to facilitate signage being installed earlier in the application process and take advantage of the District's new alternative means of notice. • Standardize signage templates with a revised template and clear and concise format. Include the applicant's and planner's contact information for the public to access.	✓
2G	**Revise Development Review "CORE" Team Meetings** • Establish new parameters for scheduling CORE meetings: 　○ Hold meetings after referral circulation. 　○ Reduce default participation to staff directly involved in application review (approximately 4–8 people for typical applications). 　○ Discuss only complex applications; routine applications can rely on the referral process for interdepartmental feedback. 　○ Allow other departments to request interdepartmental meetings as needed. • Improve ongoing collaboration and coordination between Planning and Development Engineering through increasing the number of regular meetings between representative file managers.	✓

| 2H | **Internal Application Review Resources**

 • Develop a more robust standard Comprehensive Review Letter template for consistent use across applications. Incorporate precedent examples and best practices to improve clarity, consistency, and support a streamlined application review process.

 • Introduce a simplified Engineering Referral Response Template to provide concise guidance for planners and streamline inclusion of Engineering comments in Council Reports.

 • Enhance External Referral Templates to ensure that all external organizations are clear on referral content, what is being requested as part of a referral package, and what the timeline for referral response is.

 • Reinforce requirements for internal referral response timelines and develop 'stage-gate' steps that cannot be passed without receiving referral comments or confirmation from departments (ie Issuance of Building Permit, issuance of Development Permit, inclusion of Council Report on agendas).

 • Begin developing an 'interpretation manual' to act as an internal tracking mechanism for consistency in application of District Bylaws and responses to the public.

 • Clarify roles and responsibilities across all departments included in the development approvals process, including Planning, Engineering, Building, Corporate Services, and Front Counter staff, during roll-out of new processes and documentation associated with the Development Approvals Program. | ☑ |

Action No.	Recommended Action	Status
	Organizational Development & Change Management	
3A	**Expand and Improve Staffing Capacity** • Explore expanding existing roles or hiring new front-line development staff, such as a 'Development Coordinator' or 'Super Clerk' role to manage applicant inquiries, increase rigour associated with application intake, improve customer service, and improve interdepartmental coordination for application processes between planning, engineering and building. • Consider engaging with a larger neighbouring municipality to arrange a temporary secondment of District front-counter staff for in-person training as a means to expedite exposure and experience within established systems and development topics. • Continue to provide internally hosted cross-departmental information and/or 'Lunch and Learn' sessions on basic components of application processing and local government services, such as engineering requirements, planning requirements, and building code implications. Use this as a means to build a shared understanding of the different roles and responsibilities within planning, engineering, and building.	☐

		Status
	• Create formalized onboarding practices and materials for staff that are entering new roles or are new to District.	

3B	**Expand the Use of Application Metrics and Reporting**
	
	• Continue reporting on application volumes through the District's Annual Report.
	
	• Expand the use of application management software (e.g., Tempest-Prospero) to track application volumes and timelines.
	
	• Implement internal monitoring of application timelines to:
	    o Assess whether staffing levels are sufficient to maintain desired service standards; and
	    o Establish realistic timeframes for application processing that reflect actual data.
	
	• Publish level of service targets to the public once sufficient processing history is established. (For example, Development Permits anticipated to take approximately 4 – 6 months).	

Action No.	Recommended Action	Status
	Bylaw/Policy Updates	
4A	**Official Community Plan Amendments to Design Guidelines** • Review the OCP's Development Permit Area Guidelines to ensure that desired design objectives and associated guidelines are clearly articulated. • Ensure that any future OCP Design Guidelines that are developed are concise, non-redundant, written in simple and accessible language, and clearly articulate objectives and guidelines. Further ensure that guidelines are performance based and not prescriptive to a single outcome. • Develop corresponding proposal review checklists for internal and external purposes for Development Permit compliance.	
4B	**Review Subdivision & Development Servicing Bylaw for Clarity** • Undertake a review and potentially amendments to the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw (No. 1121) to ensure servicing requirements reflect the OCP growth strategy. • Seek to improve clarity of servicing requirements in the Subdivision and Development Servicing to assist with application requirement transparency and the ability of applicants to scope their projects.	

4C	**Review and Amend Zoning Bylaw to Reduce Variances** • Audit historical Development Variance Permit applications to identify trends and potential Zoning Bylaw amendments that could reduce staff workload for commonly approved variances.	☐

4D	**Amend the Development Approvals Procedures Bylaw to Streamline Approvals**
	• Consider the following amendments to streamline application procedures:
	    ○ Remove the signage requirement for all development applications except OCP Amendments and Zoning Amendments. Development Notice Signs would only be required for OCP Amendments, Zoning Bylaw Amendments (both with and without Public Hearings).
	    ○ Update base application information to reflect revised forms.
	    ○ Require a "Description and Planning Rationale" for OCP Amendments, Rezonings, DVPs, and Development Permits.
	    ○ Require a Summary Report from applicants following Public Information Meetings.
	    ○ Update references to newspaper ads to align with Bylaw No. 1293 for alternate public notice.
	    ○ Include a definition for "substantial construction" to clarify Development Permit expiry enforcement.
	    ○ Introduce delegated authority for staff to approve minor DVPs and smaller-scale Development Permits for form and character to streamline review.
	    ○ Incorporate consideration for inclusion of a definition for 'substantial construction' be included to improve clarity of enforcement of expiry of Development Permits.
		☐

4E	**Increase Delegation of Authority to Staff**
	
	• Amend the Development Approvals Procedures Bylaw to expand delegation of approvals to staff for the following:
	    ○ Expand delegated authority for Development Permits to include form and character DPs.
	    ○ Consider establishing criteria for which Form and Character Development Permits must go to Council (ie buildings above 3 stories or 1,400m^2).
	
	• Introduce delegated authority for Minor Development Variance Permits.
	    ○ Establish criteria and guidelines for determining when variances and DPs are minor in nature and delegate minor variances to Staff.
		☐

5E	**Review Fees & Charges Bylaw to Maximize Cost Recovery**
	
	• Ensure a review of the Fees and Charges Bylaw is made regularly to align fees collected with established level of service targets, regional comparisons, and to fund staffing needs. Consider the following:
	
	    ○ Quantify staff time and resources spent on applications to inform cost recovery thresholds.
	    ○ Include research of comparable communities.
	    ○ Consider a regular fee update to avoid large jumps every few years.
	    ○ Review building permit valuation methodology and fees to reflect current market conditions and ensure fees capture actual construction costs.
		☐

URBAN SYSTEMS

Action No.	Recommended Action	Status
	Systems & Technology	
6A	**Utilize Technology to Improve Internal and External Communication** • Explore the use of expanded Tempest-Prospero tools to automate information sharing, ensure accuracy, and reduce staff workload. Utilize dashboards and summary reporting to communicate with Staff, Council, and the public.	☐
6B	**Enhance Planning Information on the District Website** • Place development application materials such as policies and reference materials (some produced as part of this process) in an easily accessible and searchable online location on the District website. • Invest in a general review of website resources and undertake measures to expand website information services and content related to planning applications and planning processes in general. Adapt Guides (completed as part of this DAPR project) to basic website content and include application flowchart graphics. • Replace the current "Planning Application Status" with Tempest-Prospero live application lookup feature. • Explore incorporation of Tempest-Prospero application details within the City's public-facing GIS system so that the public can access geospatially linked current and historical application data.	☐
6C	**Develop Digital Application Submission Program** • Continue pursuing the development of a digital application submission program to streamline submissions and reduce staff burden. • Explore enhancements to existing software like Tempest-Prospero through the integration of the eApply module which offers a web-based portal for direct, online application submissions.	☐