



STAFF REPORT TO COMMITTEE

DATE OF REPORT November 30, 2018
MEETING TYPE & DATE Electoral Area Services Committee Meeting of December 5, 2018
FROM: Development Services Division
Land Use Services Department
SUBJECT: Procedures for Priority Processing of Development Permit Applications
FILE:

PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from the Committee about proposed procedures for processing development permit applications with the intent of prioritizing development proposals that further established community development objectives.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

That it be recommended to the Board that development permit application processing procedures be adjusted to prioritize development permit applications that, in descending order of priority:

1. Result in regional and community-scale economic benefits;
2. Support bylaw enforcement actions; and
3. Result in site specific development benefits.

BACKGROUND

As a result of the current volume of development application submissions, Development Services informs proponents, at the time of application, that there will be an approximately 6-8 week delay prior to staff initiating file processing. Development Services typically processes development permits and similar types of applications in the order in which it is received. As a result of recent staff turnover, the complement of staff that are available to advise proponents and process applications is reduced from 7.0 FTE (full-time equivalents) to 4.75 FTE. Diminished staff resources are anticipated to increase the usual delay prior to staff initiating file processing.

Development Services is currently comprised of a mix of casual, temporary and permanent employees that provide the following core services:

- administration of approximately 130 active development permit files;
- advice and support for development applicants;
- information and inquiry support for the general public; and
- referrals support for internal departments and external agencies.

Recent development application activity has resulted in further backlog of approximately 35 permit applications that are anticipated to be processed as staffing levels are restored with new hiring. The recruitment processes may alleviate staff shortage by earliest, Spring 2019.

ANALYSIS

Development Services is of the opinion that current staff levels are inadequate to continue the practice of processing development permits in the order in which it is received. The expected result of continuing with current application processing procedures is further extensive delays (minimum 3+ months) prior to staff initiating file processing. Development Services is concerned that further delays will have negative implications for a wide variety of types of development ranging from proposals for regionally-beneficial business activities to site-specific developments. It may be

arguable that the timely processing of specific categories of development permit application is a potential barrier to overall community development and that it is in the public interest to establish a development permit prioritization evaluation process when limited resources are available to the local government.

For the above reasons, it is recommended that staff be directed to implement development permit application procedures that prioritize the processing of the following specific categories of types of development.

Table 1 – Application Processing Prioritization

Focus/Scale of Development	Compliance with Policy/Regulation
1. Community-focused Development 2. Public Safety & Bylaw Enforcement Issues 3. Site-specific Development	Consistent with OCP and Zoning
4. Community-focused Development 5. Public Safety & Bylaw Enforcement Issues 6. Site-specific Development	Not Consistent with OCP and/or Zoning

Table 1 outlines the broad categories of focus/scale of development application processed by Development Services and the categories of policy/regulatory compliance. It is arguable that there is a strong correlation between the focus and/or scale of development and the resulting community benefit. Additionally, staff are of the opinion that there are associations between processing time, staff resource allocation, and intensity of community engagement due to the complexity of processing applications that conform or otherwise to existing OCP policy or Zoning regulations.

Community-focused Developments may involve rezoning and complex development permit applications for Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, and multi-lot Residential properties. *Public Safety/Bylaw Enforcement* may involve rezoning, development permit and variance applications to authorize the redevelopment of buildings and structures or damaged property. *Site-specific Development* may involve development permit, variance, subdivision, sign permit, and hazardous tree removal applications for all types of property. Development proposals that are not consistent with OCP and/or Zoning generally require more staff resources, more public engagement, more legal review, and – importantly – may result in adjustments to long-term community planning goals.

The above-recommended development permit application prioritization procedure (Table 1) would have the intended effect of facilitating developments that would:

- result in community-focused economic, environmental and/or social benefits (e.g. employment sector expansion, protection of sensitive ecosystems, affordable housing);
- address public safety concerns (e.g. restore SPEAs, approve 2nd suites, etc.);
- respond to bylaw enforcement issues (e.g. unauthorized permitted uses, etc.); and
- result in site-specific benefits (e.g. accessory building improvements, etc.).

It is recommended that the General Manager of Land Use Services be delegated discretionary authority to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a new permit application will be subject to the permit application prioritization category and be processed by Development Services staff as soon as possible. Additionally, it is recommended that staff be directed to provide an update report to committee in mid-2019, detailing the outcomes the proposed administrative procedures.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

n/a

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Development Services provides written confirmation to all applicants of the anticipated delay for the processing of development permit application files by staff. The standard correspondence provided to applicants would be revised to reflect the direction of the Board.

STRATEGIC/BUSINESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

The establishment of a procedure to prioritize the processing of development permit applications would arguably be in support of the *CVRD Strategic Plan 2014-2018*, including:

- Values: Quality Service – We provide efficient, effective, professional service;
- Regional Strategic Focus Area 1 – Excellent in Regional Land Use Planning;
- Regional Strategic Focus Area 3 – Sound Fiscal Management;
- Electoral Strategic Focus Area 1 – Responsive, Official Community Planning; and
- Electoral Strategic Focus Area 2 – Proactive Approach to Bylaw Compliance.

Referred to (upon completion):

- Community Services (*Island Savings Centre, Cowichan Lake Recreation, South Cowichan Recreation, Arts & Culture, Public Safety, Facilities & Transit*)
- Corporate Services (*Finance, Human Resources, Legislative Services, Information Technology, Procurement*)
- Engineering Services (*Environmental Services, Recycling & Waste Management, Water Management*)
- Land Use Services (*Community Planning, Development Services, Inspection & Enforcement, Economic Development, Parks & Trails*)
- Strategic Services

Prepared by:

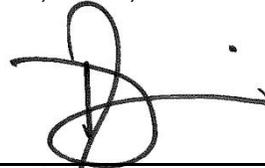


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