

Development Services Division Review

Task Force Meeting

to be held via Zoom and in person in Room A – City Hall
Wednesday, July 22, 2026
at 7:30 am.

1. **Call Regular Task Force Meeting to Order**

We acknowledge that Penticton, where we live and work, is on the traditional lands of the Syilx People in the Okanagan Nation.

2. **Adoption of Agenda**

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

3.1 Minutes of the July 8, 2026 Development Services Division Review Task Force 1-2

Recommendation

THAT the Development Services Division Review Task Force adopt the minutes of July 8, 2026 meeting as presented.

4. **New Business**

Spitale
Mattuisi

4.1 Penticton Development Services – Third Party Review 3-18

Laven 4.2 Workshop Outcomes and Draft Recommendations 19-25

Staff Recommendation:

THAT the Development Services Division Review Task Force receive into the record the report dated, July 22, 2026, and titled, "Workshop outcomes and draft recommendations".

5. **Next Meeting**

The next regular Development Services Division Review Task Force Meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2026 at 7:30 a.m. via Zoom and in person.

6. **Adjournment**

Development Services Division Review Task Force Meeting

held via Zoom and in-person in Room A
City Hall, 171 Main Street
Wednesday, July 8, 2026
at 7:30 a.m.

Present:	Jordan Knox, Chair Linda Sankey, Vice-Chair Drew Barnes (via Zoom) Kristy Dyer Sean Kimberly Scott Mayhew (via Zoom) Trina Murray (via Zoom) Jonathan Pickford Luc Rodgers Jas Sidhu (via Zoom)
Delegates:	Andréa Khan, AK Consulting (via Zoom)
Council Liaison:	Campbell Watt
Staff:	Blake Laven, General Manager of Development Services Steven Collyer, Housing and Policy Initiatives Manager Yvonne Kent, Planner II - Planning Services Janet Glowa, Legislative Assistant
Regrets:	Lisa Spitale, MCIP RPP, Consultants Ron Mattuisi, MCIP RPP, Consultants Chase Tracey

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Development Services Division Review Task Force to order at 7:33 a.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**

THAT the Development Services Division Review Task Force adopt the agenda of July 8, 2026 as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

3.1 Minutes of the June 24, 2026 Development Services Division Review Task Force

It was MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Development Services Division Review Task Force adopt the minutes of the June 24, 2026 meeting as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **New Business**

4.1 Development Services Division Review Task Force Workshop

The General Manager of Development Services facilitated a workshop that engaged Task Force members in discussions on select topics related to development approval processes and divisional operations and service delivery, including policy, procedure, and soft skills. Discussions highlighted efficiencies and opportunities for improvement.

Scott Mayhew joined the zoom meeting at 7:44 a.m.

Drew Barnes left the zoom meeting at 8:01 a.m.

Drew Barnes joined the meeting in person at 8:07 a.m.

Councillor Watt left the meeting at 8:45 a.m.

Jonathan Pickford left the meeting at 8:55 a.m.

5. **Next Meeting**

The next Development Services Division Review Task Force meeting is scheduled to be held on July 22, 2026 at 7:30 a.m. via Zoom and in person.

6. **Adjournment**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Development Services Division Review Task Force adjourn the meeting held on July 8, 2026 at 9:09 a.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Certified Correct:

Janet Glowa
Legislative Assistant

Penticton Development Services Review

Combined Summary: Homeowner Survey
and Development Industry Interviews



This report combines findings from two separate feedback sources on the City of Penticton's development and building permit process. Part A summarizes the Homeowner survey (homeowners, contractors, designers, and other permit applicants). Part B summarizes confidential in-depth interviews with development industry stakeholders (large-scale developers, builders, and professional consultants). Part C compares themes across both sources. Because the two sources draw on different populations and methods, they are reported separately throughout and should not be combined into a single statistic.

A survey was prepared for the Development Community; however, this survey received zero responses. This may indicate a lack of time or interest from this group or may be the result of the survey not being circulated.

PART A. HOMEOWNER SURVEY

Source: online survey of 14 respondents (homeowners, contractors, designers, and other applicants). Survey open June 18, 2026, through July 10, 2026.

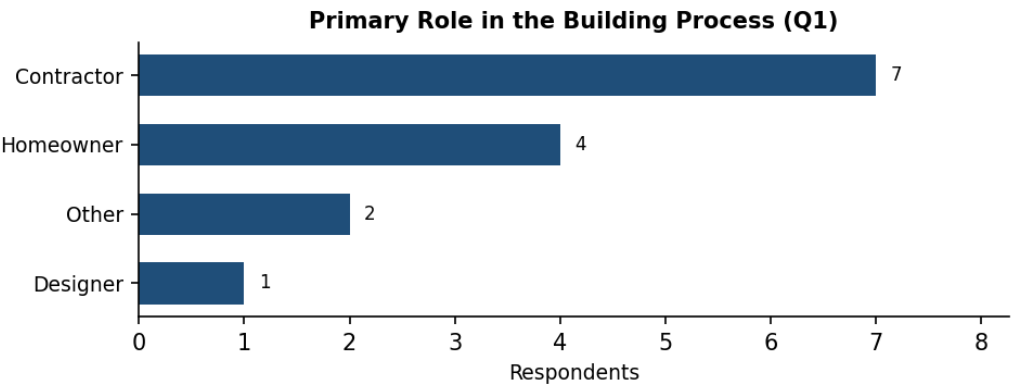
1. Overview

This section summarizes results from the City of Penticton Development Services Review survey of building permit applicants. The survey was open for 22 days, from June 18 through early July 10, 2026, promoted and disseminated by the City of Penticton. Development Services Department. The survey received 14 responses. Respondents included contractors (7), homeowners (4), a designer (1), and two respondents who selected "Other" (an agent and a representative of a commercial business). This population consists primarily of individual applicants for routine permits and does not include the large-scale development industry stakeholders covered in Part B. Because the sample is small, findings should be read as directional rather than statistically representative, and individual comments carry meaningful weight in the results below.

2. Respondent Profile

2.1 Primary Role in the Building Process (Q1)

ROLE	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Contractor	7	50.0%
Homeowner	4	28.6%
Other	2	14.3%
Designer	1	7.1%
TOTAL	14	100%

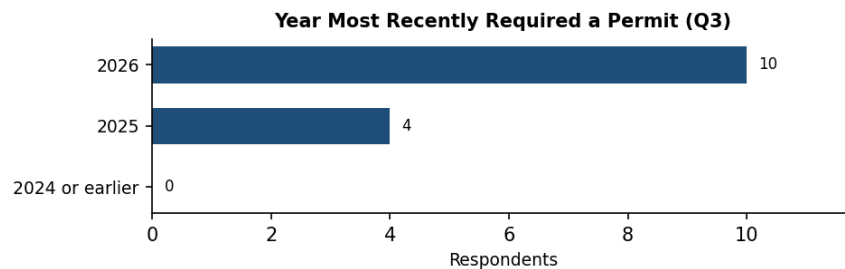


2.2 Frequency of Permit Applications (Q2)

FREQUENCY	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
More than once per year	7	50.0%
Only once	3	21.4%
Annually	2	14.3%
Fewer than once per two years	2	14.3%
Every one to two years	0	0.0%
TOTAL	14	100%

2.3 Year Most Recently Required a Permit (Q3)

YEAR	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
2026	10	71.4%
2025	4	28.6%
2024 or earlier	0	0.0%
TOTAL	14	100%



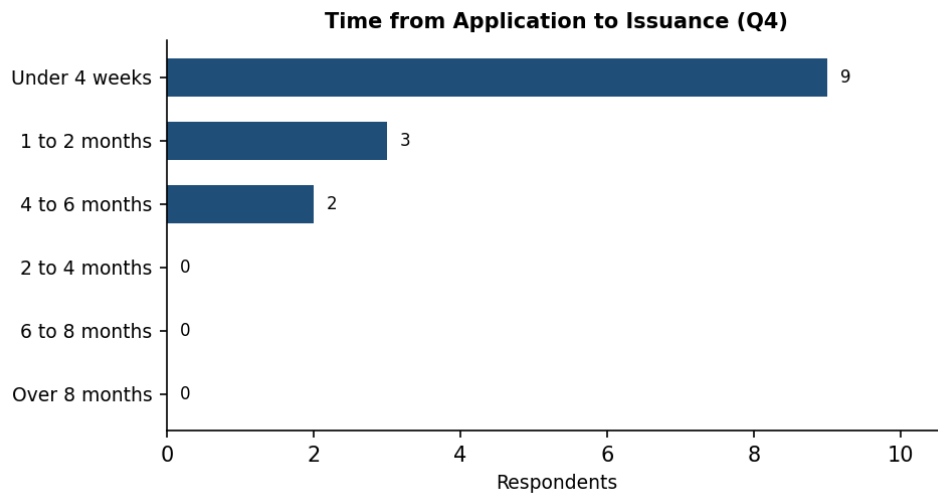
2.4 Type of Project (Q5, grouped into categories)

PERMIT TYPE CATEGORY	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Renovation/Addition	3	21.4%
Multiple/Mixed	3	21.4%
New Construction	2	14.3%
Accessory Structure	2	14.3%
Secondary Suite	1	7.1%
Tenant Improvement	1	7.1%
Demolition	1	7.1%
Restoration	1	7.1%
TOTAL	14	100%

3. Process Experience

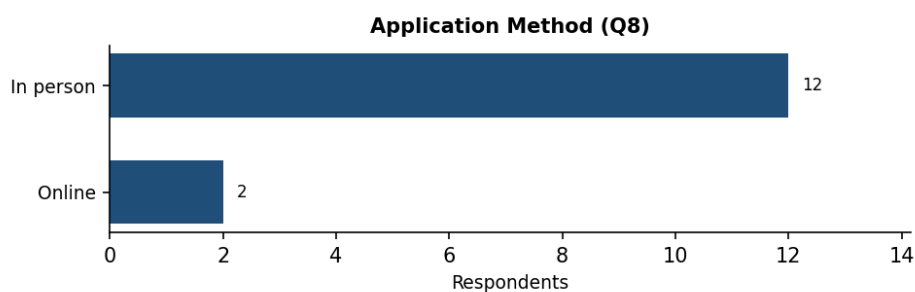
3.1 Time from Application to Issuance (Q4)

FREQUENCY	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Under 4 weeks	9	64.3%
1 to 2 months	3	21.4%
4 to 6 months	2	14.3%
2 to 4 months	0	0.0%
6 to 8 months	0	0.0%
Over 8 months	0	0.0%
TOTAL	14	100%



3.2 Application Method (Q8)

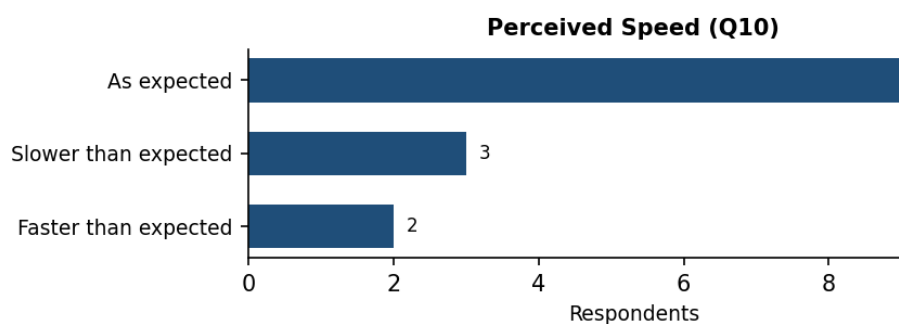
METHOD	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
In person	12	85.7%
Online	2	14.3%
TOTAL	14	100%



3.3 Staff Guidance and Perceived Speed (Q9, Q10)

Received clear guidance from City staff on the permit process (Q9): 12 of 14 respondents (85.7%) said yes; 2 (14.3%) said no.

PERCEIVED SPEED	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
As expected	9	64.3%
Slower than expected	3	21.4%
Faster than expected	2	14.3%
TOTAL	14	100%



4. Website and Pre-Application Information

11 of 14 respondents (78.6%) used the City's website for information before applying for a permit (Q6). Of all respondents, opinions on whether the information was helpful (Q7) were split:

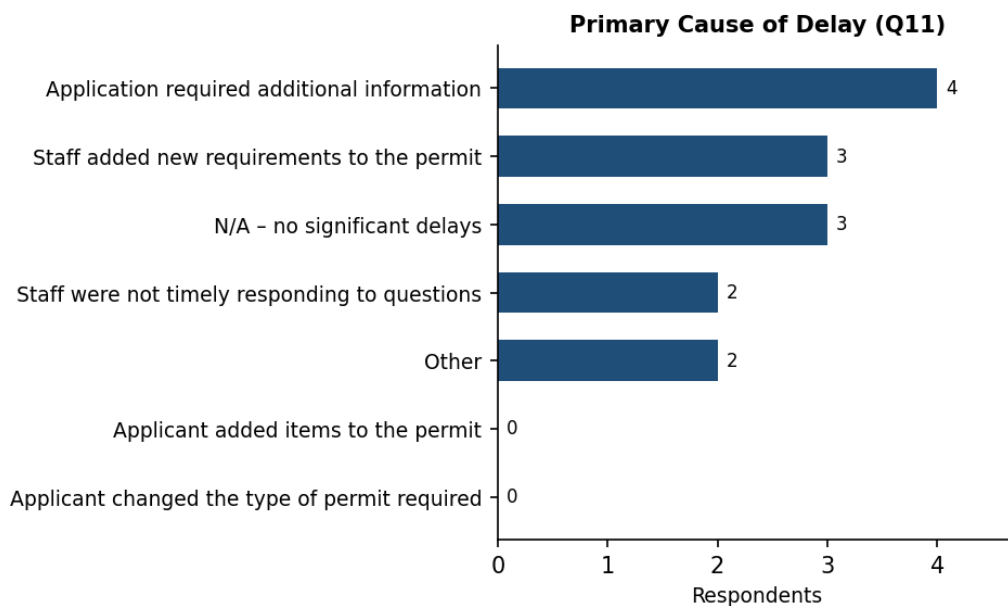
WEBSITE HELPFUL?	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Yes	6	42.9%
Somewhat	6	42.9%
No	2	14.3%
TOTAL	14	100%

Of the 3 respondents who did not use the website before applying, 2 rated the website as unhelpful and 1 rated it as somewhat helpful. No respondent both used the site and found it unhelpful.

5. Delays and Communication

5.1 Primary Cause of Delay (Q11)

CAUSE	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Application required additional information	4	28.6%
Staff added new requirements to the permit	3	21.4%
N/A – no significant delays	3	21.4%
Staff were not timely responding to questions	2	14.3%
Other	2	14.3%
Applicant added items to the permit	0	0.0%
Applicant changed the type of permit required	0	0.0%
TOTAL	14	100%

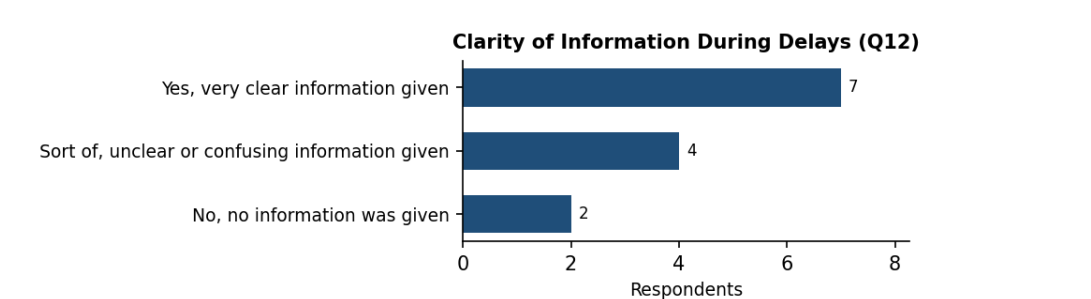


“Other” reasons included staff adding details, difficulties with CloudPermit and the staff lead going on holidays.

5.2 Clarity of Information During Delays (Q12)

Of the 13 respondents who answered this question (1 skipped):

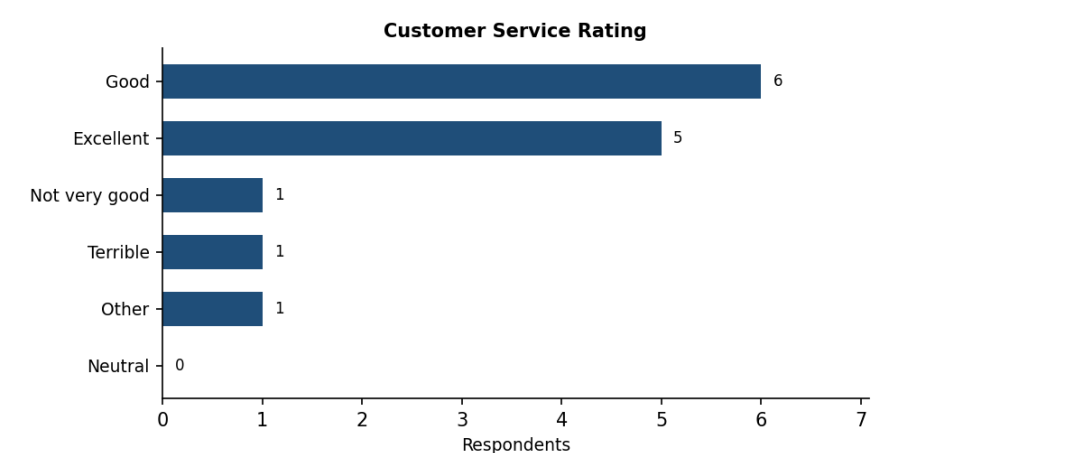
RESPONSE	RESPONDENTS	% OF ANSWERED
Yes, very clear information given	7	53.8%
Sort of, unclear or confusing information given	4	30.8%
No, no information was given	2	15.4%



5.2 Clarity of Information During Delays (Q12)

RATING	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Good	6	42.9%
Excellent	5	35.7%
Not very good	1	7.1%
Terrible	1	7.1%
Other	1	7.1%
Neutral	0	0.0%
TOTAL	14	100%

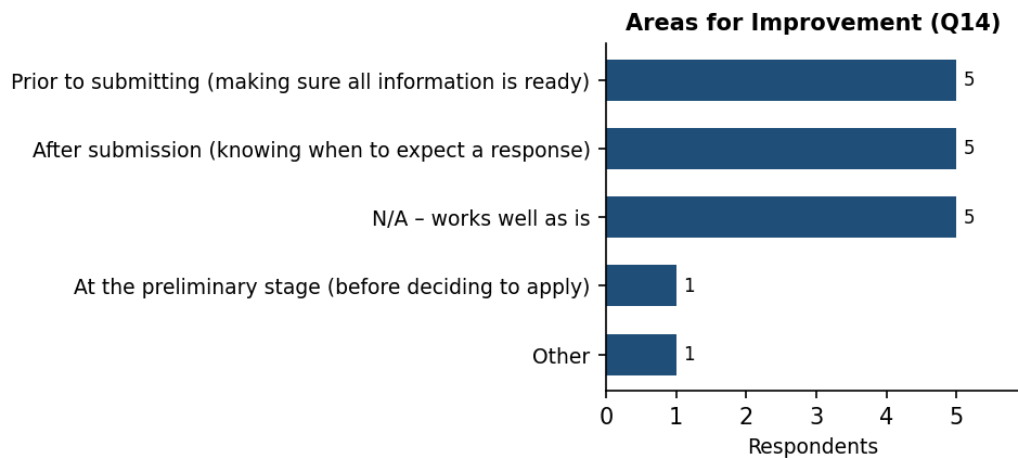
The one "Not very good" rating was paired with the "Other" accompanied by written comment describing inconsistent inspector requirements and administrative overload on City staff.



7. Areas for Improvement (Q14)

Respondents could select more than one stage of the process, so percentages sum to more than 100%.

PROCESS STAGE	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Prior to submitting (making sure all information is ready)	5	35.7%
After submission (knowing when to expect a response)	5	35.7%
N/A – works well as is	5	35.7%
At the preliminary stage (before deciding to apply)	1	7.1%
Other	1	7.1%



"Other" was accompanied by a comment recalling an inspector who consistently added requirements, the relevancy of which were questioned by the professionals on site.

Reasonable Time to Issue a Permit (Q15)

This question has been excluded from the summary. Respondent answers to this question were inconsistent and did not appear to reflect a shared understanding of what was being asked; therefore, the results are not reliable enough to report.

8. Open-Ended Recommendations (Q16)

10 of 14 respondents (71.4%) answered this open-ended question; 4 skipped it. Responses were grouped into themes below. Themes are not mutually exclusive, with some respondents raising more than one.

THEME	RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Stop changing/adding requirements after drawings are approved; avoid piecemeal information	5	35.7%
Positive / appreciative; good relationship with staff, no complaints	5	35.7%
Give inspectors more admin/support staff so they are less bogged down in paperwork	5	35.7%
CloudPermit / online permitting system needs work Survey/methodology feedback (not a process recommendation) – this was regarding Q15	1	7.1%
No recommendation offered	1	7.1%

9. Key Cross-Tabulation Findings Within the Survey

The following patterns emerged from cross-tabulating individual survey responses (n=14). Given the small sample, these should be read as directional signals rather than statistically robust findings.

9.1 Delay Cause Differs by Role

All 3 respondents who cited "staff added new requirements" as their primary delay cause were homeowners (3 of the 4 homeowner respondents). No contractor cited this cause. Contractors were more likely to cite "application required additional information" (4 of 7) or delays related to CloudPermit ("other", 1 of 7).

9.2 Turnaround Time Was Similar Across Roles

Contractors and homeowners had similar shares of permits issued in under 4 weeks (5 of 7 contractors, 71%; 3 of 4 homeowners, 75%).

The two respondents who selected "Other" as their role both fell in the 1-to-2-month band. The sample is too small to conclude that repeat applicants (contractors) receive faster service than one-time applicants (homeowners).

9.3 Perceived Speed Generally Tracked Actual Issuance Time

Of the 3 respondents who felt the process was "slower than expected," 2 had permits issued in the 4-to-6-month band (the longest in this dataset) and 1 was issued in under 4 weeks despite feeling it was slow. All 9 respondents who felt the process was "as expected" had permits issued within 2 months.

9.4 Additional-Information Delays Did Not Lower Satisfaction

All 4 respondents whose delay was attributed to their application requiring additional information rated customer service "Excellent."

By contrast, of the 3 respondents whose delay was attributed to staff adding new requirements, 2 rated service "Good" and 1 rated it "Terrible", suggesting that added requirements, specifically, are more strongly associated with dissatisfaction than requests for missing information.

10. Homeowner Survey Summary

Across the 14 survey responses, the permit process was generally rated positively: most permits (64.3%) were issued in under 4 weeks, most respondents (85.7%) said City staff gave clear guidance, and most (78.6%) rated customer service "Good" or "Excellent."

The most consistent concern, raised independently through both the delay-cause question and the open-ended recommendations, was that City staff or inspectors sometimes add or change requirements after an application or drawings have already been approved. This theme appeared in the delay-cause responses (3 of 14), the customer service comments, and the open-ended recommendations (3 of 14).

A second recurring theme was that building department staff are seen as skilled but under-resourced on the administrative side, raised by 2 respondents independently in two different questions.

PART B. DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Source: seven confidential interviews with development industry stakeholders, conducted June 2026 by Ron Mattiussi and Lisa Spitale, with support from Leah Menzies (R.L. Mattiussi Advisory Services Inc., Lisa Spitale Consulting Inc., Andréa Khan Consulting, and LM Consulting Services). Prepared for the City of Penticton as Phase 1 of the Development Services Third Party Review.

This population is different from the Part A survey population. Interview participants were a mix of small- and large-scale developers, builders, and professional consultants (including engineers and architects). Interviewees were selected based on recommendations from industry organizations, referrals from local professionals, and an independent review of recent development projects. All had been actively involved in development-related projects with the City of Penticton within the past two years. Unlike Part A, this source skews toward larger-scale and more complex development projects and toward industry professionals rather than individual homeowners. Part C compares themes between the survey and interview results.

11. Overview

Seven confidential interviews were conducted with representatives from the local development industry, covering a broad range of experiences across project types, scales, and areas of interaction with the Development Services Department. While individual views differed depending on project type and complexity, several common themes emerged relating to communication, process efficiency, interdepartmental coordination, accountability, consistency of requirements, and opportunities to improve the overall development and building experience. This is a preliminary summary; recommendations, analysis, and conclusions will follow in the final report after all phases of the review are complete.

12. Key Interview Themes

12.1 Experience Varies Significantly by Project Type

The strongest finding was a contrast between basic building permit applications and straightforward infill projects. Participants generally described these positively, with timelines comparing favourably to industry standards and productive relationships with City staff. However, for complex development applications (subdivisions, multi-family developments, and single-family residential projects requiring OCP changes, rezoning, development permits, development variance permits, or subdivision approvals), participants described greater delays, ongoing uncertainty, inconsistent requirements, and difficulty navigating decisions both within Development Services and across other departments. This was characterized as below industry standards within the Okanagan. Some participants also felt the City's expectations of applicants varied depending on the applicant's capacity to deliver. Overall, the process was seen as functioning well for infill housing but becoming harder to navigate as project complexity increases.

12.2 Desire for a Single Point of Accountability

A repeated recommendation was for a dedicated City representative or project lead to shepherd applications through the process. Planning, Engineering, Building, and Fire Services were identified as having poor coordination. Interviewees described:

- Responsibility fragmented across departments;
- Communication becoming disjointed as files move between departments;
- No single staff member appearing accountable for a project's overall progress;
- Decisions sometimes revisited later in the review process;
- Differing staff interpretations;
- Additional or conflicting requirements introduced after expectations had been established;
- Delays caused by internal review bottlenecks.

12.3 Consistency and Predictability Are Highly Valued

Interviewees repeatedly emphasized the importance of consistent interpretation and application of regulations, citing concerns that different applicants receive different expectations, requirements vary between projects, and enforcement is not always applied consistently. Interviewees also wanted anticipated Development Cost Charges (DCCs) identified as early as possible to protect project feasibility, and a detailed list of professional reports that may be required outside general permit requirements. The development community values the certainty this would provide for budgeting and planning.

12.4 Building Permit Timelines and Review Efficiency

Opinions on permit timelines varied significantly within this interview group:

- Smaller developers reported building permit timelines approaching 11 weeks, longer waits than historically experienced, and financial impacts from carrying labour and overhead during delays.
- Industry professionals and larger developers reported typical timelines of approximately 4–6 weeks which is faster than many neighbouring municipalities.

Both smaller and larger developers raised concerns about carrying costs during the approval process, and noted that approval requirements have increased over time, adding time and cost. Previous City practice allowed basic groundwork to begin before permit approval; interviewees noted this is no longer the case. Overall, perceptions of permit performance varied considerably by project type, application completeness, or internal review stream.

12.5 Perception of Organizational Risk Aversion

- Several interviewees perceived a risk-averse culture in certain areas of the organization, particularly Engineering and Building review, citing:
- Inability to communicate decisions in writing
- Duplicate review of work already certified by qualified professionals, or failure to review qualified-professional reports
- Extensive inspection requirements causing delays
- A shift from provisional restrictions (allowing project continuity) to stop-work orders until a provision is completed
- Firefighting waterflow calculations required despite sprinkler system installation
- A perceived lack of field experience among some building officials, contributing to delays and additional reports/studies at cost to the developer
- Stakeholders generally support regulatory oversight but would prefer it be streamlined to avoid duplication and create clearer staff-level ownership.

12.6 Planning Staff Feedback

Planning was identified as a departmental strength, particularly when assigned as a project contact or on basic applications:

- Staff are seen as knowledgeable and responsive on basic applications;
- Communication is generally strong when a planner acts as primary contact;
- Pre-application meetings are valued and appreciated;
- Planning staff are perceived as more flexible and solution-oriented with professionals and larger developers than with smaller, less experienced developers;
- Low staff turnover is seen as contributing to strong working relationships with industry.

Multiple interviewees expressed concern that the new Development Services Review Task Force could resemble the previous Development Housing Task Force (tasked with aligning the OCP with provincial housing

changes), with some expressing the view that City staff had a predetermined approach to the OCP influenced by special interest groups.

12.7 Communication Improvements

Interviewees acknowledged improvements in recent years, including increased responsiveness, more collaborative relationships, improved dialogue between staff and industry professionals, and improved willingness to consider professional opinions. Interviewees also wanted:

- More frequent project updates;
- Earlier identification of concerns;
- Better documentation of decisions;
- Greater transparency regarding project viability;
- Reinstating in-person Technical Planning Committee meetings, with a project representative included.

Communication has improved but remains one of the most important opportunities for continued improvement.

12.8 Digital Permitting and Cloud System Feedback

Interviewees generally support digital submissions but identified operational challenges with the current system:

- Files moving in and out of review status;
- Project delays while waiting for applicant responses;
- Difficulty tracking multiple revisions;
- Limited visibility into project progress details;
- Desire for more detailed status updates;
- Costs associated with updating digital files.

The industry supports digital permitting and understands that ongoing system refinements could improve efficiency and user experience.

12.9 Council Support and Involvement for Development

Feedback on Council's involvement varied significantly. Some interviewees felt Council has limited opportunity to influence development or demonstrate support for the industry due to reduced involvement in project-specific discussions, and that this has significantly affected project success for some smaller developers. Conversely, larger developers and industry professionals valued the Planning Department's progressive, responsive approach, and in these instances supported giving staff additional authority for project decisions.

13. Interviews Summary

The seven industry interviews showed that experiences with the Development Services Department vary significantly by project complexity. Participants involved in straightforward building permits and infill projects generally reported positive experiences, reasonable timelines, and effective communication. Those involved in more complex development applications more often described challenges with departmental coordination, consistent regulations, communication, and overall process navigation.

Recurring themes included a desire for clearer project ownership and accountability across departments, and the importance of consistent interpretation and application of requirements for project planning and budgeting. Feedback on permit timelines was mixed by project type and applicant. Planning staff were generally viewed positively for knowledge, responsiveness, and collaboration. Communication was seen as improved in recent

years, though it remains a leading area for further improvement, particularly regarding project updates, transparency, and documentation of decisions.

Note: this Part B content is a preliminary summary of Phase 1 interview observations only. Recommendations, analysis, and conclusions will be provided in the final report following completion of all phases of the Development Services Third Party Review.

PART C. CROSS-SOURCE COMPARISON

Part A (survey, n=14) and Part B (interviews, n=7) are different information sources, collected with different methods from different populations. Part A skews toward individual applicants for routine permits, while Part B skews toward large-scale developers and professional consultants working on more complex projects. The table below compares themes across both sources where a comparison is possible. Where a theme appears independently in both sources, that convergence is a stronger signal than either source alone; where the sources diverge, this most often reflects the difference in project complexity and applicant type between the two groups, consistent with Part B's own finding that experience varies by project complexity.

THEME	PART A: SURVEY (HOMEOWNERS/ CONTRACTORS, N=14)	PART B: INTERVIEWS (LARGE DEVELOPERS/ PROFESSIONALS, N=7)
Overall experience	Mostly positive; 64.3% under 4 weeks, 78.6% rated service Good/Excellent	Highly dependent on project complexity: positive for infill/basic permits, frequently negative for complex/multi-family/subdivision applications
Consistency of requirements	"Staff added new requirements" was a top delay cause (3 of 14, all homeowners) and a top open-ended theme (3 of 14)	Consistency and predictability raised repeatedly as one of the strongest, most common concerns across interviewees
Permit timelines	64.3% issued in under 4 weeks; 14.3% took 4–6 months	Mixed: smaller developers report timelines approaching 11 weeks; larger developers/professionals report 4–6 weeks, faster than neighbouring municipalities
Digital permitting (CloudPermit)	2 of 14 flagged rollout issues or asked to expand it to more permit types	General support for digital submission, but concerns about file status visibility, tracking revisions, and cost of updates
Planning staff / guidance	85.7% received clear guidance from staff; mostly Good/Excellent service ratings	Planning identified as a departmental strength - knowledgeable, responsive, valued pre-application meetings. Flexibility perceived as greater for professionals/larger developers than smaller ones
Administrative capacity	Open-ended answers theme: inspectors need more admin/support staff (2 of 14)	Desire for a single point of accountability; concerns about fragmented responsibility and coordination across Planning, Engineering, Building, and Fire
Communication	Mixed: 53.8% found delay information very clear, 15.4% received no information	Improvements acknowledged in recent years, but still a leading concern. Desire for more frequent updates, better documentation of decisions, and reinstated in-person Technical Planning Committee meetings

Where the Two Sources Align

The clearest point of convergence is around consistency: both individual applicants (Part A) and industry professionals (Part B) independently raised concerns about requirements being added or changed after an application had already progressed or been approved. Both sources also raised concerns about administrative or coordination capacity. Part A respondents wanted more admin support for inspectors, while Part B interviewees wanted a single accountable project lead and better interdepartmental coordination. Both sources support digital permitting in principle but flagged operational friction with the current system.

Where the Two Sources Diverge

Part A respondents were, on balance, positive about timelines and service; however, this population was applying mostly for routine, lower-complexity permits (renovations, additions, secondary suites, and similar). Part B interviewees describe a much wider range of outcomes, with straightforward infill projects experiencing timelines and service comparable to Part A's results, but complex development applications (rezoning, subdivision, multi-family) experiencing significantly more delay, uncertainty, and coordination difficulty. This divergence is not necessarily a contradiction between the two groups. It is consistent with Part B's own finding that project complexity is the strongest driver of experience, with Part A's population concentrated at the lower-complexity end of that spectrum.



Date: July 22, 2026
To: Development Services Division Review Task Force
From: Blake Laven, GM of Development Services
Subject: Workshop outcomes and draft recommendations

File No: RMS 5540-20

Staff Recommendation

THAT the Development Services Division Review Task Force receive into the record the report dated, July 22, 2026, and titled, "Workshop outcomes and draft recommendations"

Background

At the July 8th, 2026 meeting the Task Force was led through a workshop intended to identify challenges and opportunities with the Development Service Division and how applications are processed. The workshop was organized around three main categories: Policy, Procedure and Soft Skills. Task Force members shared challenges and suggested improvements in each category. The outcomes of the workshop were collected and a summary of the main points brought up are attached in Attachment A.

The next steps for the Task Force are to develop the comments into recommendations for divisional improvements for Council consideration and for incorporation into the larger third party divisional review currently underway.

To assist this work, staff have begun to generate draft recommendations based on the workshop outcomes.

DRAFT recommendations

The following recommendations are being developed with the goal of building a predictable, collaborative, and efficient development approval system and improving the financial environment for development within Penticton. The following 13 recommendations are presented for the Task Forces' consideration, with the option to amend, remove, or accept each recommendation as deemed appropriate. Other items that were discussed are included in a parking lot for further Task Force discussion.

- 1. Establish and communicate a development services values charter:** Publish a clear values charter that guides staff decision-making and customer service, emphasizing professionalism, consistency, accountability, collaboration, and commitment to serving the public interest.
- 2. Implement a professional reliance framework:** Develop a formal professional reliance policy that recognizes and appropriately relies upon the expertise of qualified registered professionals where permitted by legislation, reducing duplication of review while maintaining public safety and regulatory compliance.

3. Create a fair, transparent, and timely appeals process: Establish a clear process for resolving disputes, differing interpretations, and technical disagreements related to policy, bylaws, and building code requirements. The process should be timely, transparent, well-documented, and include clear escalation pathways.

4. Improve the current development fees structure: Review and refine the fee structure to improve transparency, fairness, and cost recovery. Incorporate incentives for applicants who utilize qualified professionals, participate in pre-application meetings, achieve sustainability objectives, or consistently submit complete applications.

5. Strengthen partnerships for public realm improvements: Recognize the essential role that the development industry plays in delivering community infrastructure and city-building objectives. Explore opportunities for municipal capital funding partnerships to support strategic off-site improvements that provide broader public benefit beyond individual development projects (sidewalks, street trees etc.) and look at ensuring the DCC program is set up to maximally benefit development.

6. Review and streamline development approval processes: Undertake a comprehensive review of development processes using Lean or similar continuous improvement methodologies to identify inefficiencies, eliminate unnecessary steps, reduce duplication, and remove non-value-added activities. The objective should be to create a more efficient, predictable, and customer-focused approval process while maintaining regulatory compliance and public safety standards.

7. Create a seamless digital permitting experience: Streamline the permit application process by ensuring all development, building, and related permit applications can be submitted and tracked through a single digital platform. Work to reduce duplicate submission requirements and enable coordinated review of multiple permits associated with the same project.

8. Strengthen the development concierge model

Assign a single point of contact to every development application who is responsible for shepherding the project through the approval process, coordinating internal reviews, managing departmental handoffs, and providing applicants with consistent communication and timely updates throughout the project lifecycle.

9. Standardize project, pre-application, kick-off and close-out meetings: Implement standardized pre-application process and pre-project meetings for significant developments to align expectations, identify risks, and establish communication protocols. Conduct post-project debrief sessions to identify lessons learned, improve future processes, and strengthen relationships with industry partners.

10. Acknowledge the unique challenge of buildings built under previous building codes: Approach buildings built under previous building codes, utilizing a risk based approach focussing on life safety outcomes rather than full compliance with current code standards in all circumstances.

11. Adopt a collaborative inspection model: Improve inspection practices through improved communication and problem-solving. Where practical, inspectors should discuss deficiencies with on-site representatives before issuing failures, providing opportunities to clarify circumstances, correct minor issues, and reduce unnecessary project delays.

12. Develop a pre-approved housing plans program: Create or endorse a library of pre-reviewed and code-compliant housing plans that can be reused by builders and homeowners, with significant benefits in not requiring a development permit, permit fees reductions and potentially less inspections.

13. Consolidate and maintain technical bulletins: Undertake a comprehensive review of existing technical bulletins, policies, and interpretation documents. Consolidate where possible and ensure all published guidance is current, professionally vetted, regularly updated, and easily accessible to applicants and industry professionals.

Parking lot of other items that may be out of scope or items brought up that were not incorporated into recommendations: Addressing our risk aversion culture (too many engineers required); enforcement approach and using stop work orders injudiciously; preferred builder program; promoting sustainable construction; area planning process; decision making process and communication of decisions re bike lanes, tax implications and other decision with community impact.

Analysis

The draft recommendations have been created from ideas generated during earlier Task Force meetings. Staff hope the recommendations can be further refined and built upon to where the Task Force can accept the recommendations and forward them to Council with support.

At this time, staff are recommending that this report be received into the record.

Attachments

Attachment A – Workshop breakout notes

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Laven,
GM of Development Services

Attachment A

Development Services Divisional Review Task Force Meeting

July 8, 2026

Workshop Notes

Policy

- Sustainable transport and building efficiency incentives
- Pre-zone more, with infrastructure upgrades
- Area planning (North Gateway is a good example, but additional steps could be taken
 - Complete to improve consistency, clear objectives and guidelines for an area
 - Be cautious of being overly prescriptive
- Tree planting requirements to mitigate heat island effects (on-site and in public realm)
- Development cost reductions for efficient buildings (step code, etc.)
- Incentives if complete planning pre-app meetings
- Incentives for future-proofed buildings (upgraded electrical)
- Building department representation at planning pre-apps needed
- Checklist at pre-application meeting would be beneficial
- Transparent decisions re: inspections
- Fee structure needs amending
 - Too expensive for permits in pentiction?
 - Fee assessment process isn't transparent enough (should be fixed square foot not projected building costs)
 - Larger discounts for professionals (part of professional reliance model approach)
- Do we need as many engineers as we require?
- Inspections: We should have a building envelope inspection and potentially flashing

Procedures

- Clear checklists and processes
- Clearly communicated expectations (with Building Inspectors)
- One or two building officials assigned to projects from start
- Building official input early helps avoid issues and 'regulator' heavy hand later in the process
- Project handoffs are key, from pre-app to plan review can lead to items to be fixed/addressed
- Involvement of Fire Dept review with building official, experiencing different interpretations and direction from city staff
- Unclear direction allows for misinterpretation
- Improve coordination among city departments through building process
- Tailored supports for 'one-off' applicants vs. regular applicants
 - Acknowledge that some procedure changes help all
- Concierge program sometimes means you are not talking to the decision-maker or person with most expertise in subject area
- Building inspectors at pre-apps is important

- Highlighted for existing buildings
- Changing file managers leads to project delays (need smoother transition)
- Better record keeping to help with changing staff on files (i.e. checklists)
- Deficiency lists for outstanding files
- Appreciate online applications but remember to keep ability to interact in person (human element)
- Ensure including building etc. departments in planning pre-apps does not increase overall timelines (balancing workloads)
- More collaboration in professional reliance (stop work orders and inspections)
- Inspection process needs improvement as it currently creates delays
- Preferred building program to build trust and reduce the amount of inspection for trusted builders
- Need to have a pre-project tail-gate meeting with the Inspector and any City staff and construction team at the start of every project to outline communication protocols expectations etc.
- Everything needs to be through Cloud permit (currently only some applications) but we need access to City staff at City Hall
- We should not need 6 applications for one project. If sub applications are required the City should sort that out on their end under the one master application and not require the applicant to get an agency agreement and fill out multiple applications for one project (ie house, retaining wall, pool, plumbing all needing separate applications to be filled out)
- Inspectors should have a copy of the approved plans on site or loaded on tablet when they come for inspection.
- Should be a post project debrief and evaluation / survey of the process to identify issues and areas for improvement and training for the inspector to work on if the case may be.
- When doing an inspection talk with the builder to go over any deficiencies before looping in the owner and registering a 'FAILED' status on Cloud permit when there are only minor issues to address. Work with the on site team to address first.

Soft skills

- Improve format and language of building inspection reports
 - Not always as bad as it sounds
 - Too vague
 - Leads to questions/concerns from applicants (and owners) to consultants
 - Hand written in the past was friendlier
 - "Failed", "Incomplete", "Partial" find different language
- Communication streams lost between Cloudpermit and email
 - Some inspectors not checking Cloudpermit frequently
- Cloudpermit improvements are needed, not at its full potential
- Empower building officials to (in some cases) write inspection reports and make decisions, there has been a shift to needing group review and decision-making on outcomes at the office

- Hard to keep information bulletins up to date or for users to know the information is still correct/valid
- Post-project meeting to review process and opportunities for improvement
 - City can observe commend trends that arise and report on/work to address those trends
- Consistency among building officials can be improved
 - Examples of some looking at specific 'areas of interest'
- Frequency of Building Code updates is a challenge on both sides
- Continue professional development and builders sessions with industry and staff
- Culture policy/vision statement to ensure consistent and respectful service delivery for every user
- "Here to help" mentality – on budget and on time
- Focus on service delivery (development as a service)
- Transparency in decision-making (why are we doing what we do)
 - Traffic circles
 - Take my car away
 - Development with limited parking
 - Bike lanes
 - Property tax impacts
- What is happening is clear, but the why is not clear
- Combative vs. "here to help" facilitate
- Attitude change does not mean more building code violations
- Healthy city-building city
- Builders like a set time when they can come down and speak to an inspector directly without an appointment (ie used to be that in the mornings there would be an assigned inspector)
- If you are going to do bulletins, they should be created by professionals. The current bulletins are too proscriptive of approaches where there are multiple options and have errors in them
- Be collaborative not always combative – potentially have a values statement to reference and staff to buy into
- Support an attitude of Public Service
- Need a system for dealing with conflict and clearly laid out appeals process
- Inspection report should be more clear and simple