



Planning and Land Use Committee Report

For the Meeting of October 15, 2015

To: Planning and Land Use Committee **Date:** September 25, 2015
From: Jonathan Tinney, Director, Sustainable Planning & Community Development
Subject: 2015 Development Summit Action Plan and Final Report

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the *2015 Development Summit Action Plan* outlined in the body of this report.
2. Direct staff to provide an update to Council on the status of the action items outlined in the Action Plan in February 2016 and as part of the ongoing Quarterly Updates.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the results of the second annual Development Summit held on June 23, 2015, and to propose a 2015 Development Summit Action Plan (Action Plan) for Council's consideration. Victoria's development industry, design professionals, neighbourhood representatives, Mayor, Council and City staff were broadly invited to the Development Summit to share their ideas on improving the City's land use application and permit processes, with a particular focus on reducing turnaround timelines.

Participants expressed a desire for clearer and more efficient processes, more opportunity for interaction with staff, continued improvement in customer service, and for a more-client sensitive approach to decision-making. Many different ways to improve the City's application processes were identified. Some of the most common recommendations were:

- delegate more approval authority to staff;
- communicate clear steps and requirements for all application processes;
- formalize pre-application appointments;
- use technology to facilitate the sharing of information;
- better support the Community Association Land Use Committee process; and
- explore a range of specific actions to eliminate pinch points and process bottlenecks.

The proposed Action Plan (Appendix 1) builds directly on this feedback to propose a series of administrative, operational, customer service and governance improvements that, collectively, will make the City's application processes more effective and efficient. These improvements encourage an applicant-centred approach to reducing turnaround times, continuing to improve customer service, and building collaborative relationships with the development industry and community associations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the results of the second annual Development Summit held on June 23, 2015, and to propose an Action Plan for Council's consideration.

BACKGROUND

The City of Victoria held its second annual Development Summit: Working Together, Doing Business in the Capital City on June 23, 2015. Victoria's development industry, design professionals, neighbourhood representatives, Mayor, Council and City staff were broadly invited to share their ideas on improving the City's land use application and permit processes, with a particular focus on reducing process timelines. A total of 127 stakeholders participated in the event, including 55 City staff representing every step of the application and approval process.

The 2015 Development Summit was designed to share the many different perspectives on the City of Victoria's development and permit processes. The invitation list was broadened this year to include more City staff, as well as design professionals (designers, architects and landscape architects) and representatives from the construction and real estate industries. The format of the event, including a panel and small roundtable discussions with a mix of sectors at each table, was structured to encourage dialogue and give staff the opportunity to hear directly from customers. City staff were active participants in the roundtable discussions.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

What We Heard

Through the Development Summit panel and roundtable discussions, participants identified shared values and priority actions to improve the application and permit processes. There was a high level of consistency among the different groups throughout the discussion. A full summary of feedback is provided in the 2015 Development Summit Final Report (Attachment 2).

A number of principles were identified that could guide improvements to the City's land use and permit processes:

- Clarity: That timelines, processes, requirements and fees are clear and consistent
- Speed: That turnaround times for processing applications are faster
- Dialogue: That there is more opportunity to engage in discussion regarding issues that arise
- Customer Service: That customers are served in a professional manner
- Advice: That advice is client-centred to navigate applicants through City processes
- Safety: That development is compliant with codes in order to protect life and property

Participants were asked to identify the key actions that the City should undertake to improve processing times over the next year. Some of the top recommendations identified were:

- Consider delegating more approval authority to staff
- Create a fast-track system for frequent customers
- Change PLUC procedures so that applicants can present and/or answer questions
- Develop clear steps and requirements for all application processes
- Formalize pre-application meetings for planning applications
- Scrutinize all City processes to reduce delays

- Continue to improve customer service
- Provide more support to the Community Association Land Use Committee process
- Continue to build collaborative relationships
- Maximize the use of technology to facilitate the sharing of information
- Establish one point of contact for applicants
- Reduce regulatory barriers in key growth areas
- Provide more support to existing and prospective businesses.

2015 Development Summit Action Plan

The Action Plan (Appendix 1) recommends a series of actions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the City of Victoria's development and permit processes, drawn directly from the feedback received at the 2015 Development Summit. The Action Plan also builds on on-going initiatives from last year's Development Summit Action Plan and incorporates additional actions identified at a cross-departmental staff workshop on improving the planning application processes (July 2015). A summary of key actions is provided below; see Appendix 1 for a full list of actions.

Key Short-Term Actions (July 2015- July 2016) (full list in Appendix 1)

External Improvements

- Recommend revised options for Council to consider delegation of approval authority to staff for some types of development applications (November 2015)
- Recommend exempting certain minor works from requiring a Development Permit to reduce application volumes (November 2015)
- Explore options and best practices for a fast-track system for building permits for certified third-party professionals and/or frequent customers (February 2016)
- Develop a "Planning 101" series for Community Association Land Used Committees and residents to provide a better understanding of Victoria's policies, land use procedures and development application processes (February 2016)
- Create a Business Hub at City Hall in order to grow and streamline business and development processes in Victoria (December 2015 – tentative date)

Internal Process Improvements

- Conduct a review of all City permit and planning application processes to simplify and streamline application processes, including process-specific focus groups with applicants to identify solutions. Implement identified solutions (now – January 2016)
- In the meantime, implement the following improvements to streamline applications:
 - Provide the option for developers to prepare some legal agreements after third reading (Public Hearing) of zoning amendment bylaws to achieve Public Hearings sooner (November 2015)
 - Promote pre-application appointments for planning and building permit applications, including interdepartmental team attendance as appropriate (November 2015)
 - Increase the frequency of staff review of applications (Technical Review Group) from bi-weekly to weekly (October 2015- underway)
 - Identify the types of simple planning applications for which public hearing dates can be set on the same day that Council ratifies the Planning and Land Use

Committee motion, instead of waiting for a later meeting (for Council's consideration - TBD)

- Work with Council to explore changes in Council procedures to allow applicants to make a presentation to PLUC and/or respond to PLUC questions directly (for Council's consideration - TBD)

Key Medium-Term Actions (July 2016- July 2018) (full list in Appendix 1)

- Work with Community Association Land Use Committees to fine-tune the Community Association Land Use Committee process to support any administrative streamlining, while maintaining meaningful consultation (underway - 2017)
- Develop on-line planning and permit applications, including submission of revised plans during the processes (2017)
- Expand the Development Tracker to include all other types of applications in addition to rezonings and development permits (2016-2018)

Success Metrics and Targets

Measuring success is critical to determining whether the proposed improvements will achieve the goal of reducing application turnaround times. The potential times savings for each individual action varies from a few minutes (e.g. website improvements) to a few months (e.g. delegation of approval authority) and, depending on the action, may apply only to a narrow range of applications. Appendix 1 presents an order of magnitude estimate for the potential time savings for each proposed action.

Table 1 shows the current turnaround time targets for City application processes. As part of the Action Plan, staff will explore re-organizing intake procedures and assigning new applications to different review streams based on the complexity of the application. Metrics and targets will be refined for each stream, to more clearly communicate expectations and goals for the parts of the process under the City's responsibility.

Table 1. Success Metrics: Planning and Permit Application Turnaround Times (metrics to be refined)

SUCCESS METRIC	TARGET	JULY 2015 ACTUAL: % OF TIME TARGET MET	JULY 2016 GOAL: % OF TIME TARGET MET
Planning Applications			
Reviewed by an interdepartmental staff team (TRG) and coordinated comments will be sent to the applicant	Within 4 weeks of submission	Data not previously collected. Baseline being established with new Development Tracker.	75%
Presented to a Committee of Council, if no revisions	Within 8-12 weeks after staff review	Data not previously collected. Baseline being established with new Development Tracker.	75%
Presented to a Committee of Council, if some revisions	Within 12-16 weeks from resubmission		
Board of Variance Applications will be presented to the Board of Variance for a decision	Within 4-5 weeks of submission	Data not previously collected. Baseline being established with new Development Tracker.	75%

SUCCESS METRIC	TARGET	JULY 2015 ACTUAL: % OF TIME TARGET MET	JULY 2016 GOAL: % OF TIME TARGET MET
Permits Processing (Building, Electrical, Plumbing)			
Applications reviewed and approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple demolitions • Interior strip-outs • Blasting • Emergency repairs • Plumbing • Electrical 	1 - 2 business days	78% (prior to Dec. 19, 2014) 25% (after Dec. 19, 2014)*	90%
Applications reviewed and approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial tenant interior improvements 	5 - 7 business days	70%	90%
Applications reviewed and approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New buildings, including commercial buildings 	15 - 20 business days	78% (prior to Dec. 19, 2014) 25% (after Dec. 19, 2014)*	90%
Applications reviewed and approved: Other building permits	10 - 20 business days	98%	98%

*Provincial building code changes took effect on December 19, 2014 which had an impact on the turnaround times for this reporting period. This figure dropped to 25% as there was an increase in volume of permit applications that were submitted leading up to the code changes, affecting review times.

For most types of permits, the current goal is to meet turnaround time targets 90% of the time. This goal falls short of 100% as it reflects what is achievable under current staffing levels and process structure. Also, some more complex permit applications can take longer to process to ensure that the City meets its legislative requirements for review and approval. Adjustments and re-alignment of permits staff and processes is currently underway. New, more up-to-date metrics will be developed to reflect the new, streamlined processes.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Time Savings

If implemented collectively over the next 12 months, the actions will reduce known delays in the application process and will continue to build customer service and relationships. Potential times savings are compared and quantified (where possible) in the detailed Action Plan in Appendix 1. Additional improvements may be identified through a process-specific review with staff and applicants and these will be implemented immediately, where feasible.

Development Industry Consultation

City staff met with representatives from the Urban Development Institute on September 29, 2015 to discuss the proposed actions. Generally, the representatives felt that the draft actions address the industry's concerns and suggestions. The representatives provided additional comments about the value of pre-application meetings for building permits and planning applications, and how this could be integrated into the pre-application process. This feedback has been incorporated into the Action Plan, and will be further explored through the full review of internal processes (Action #8, Appendix 1).

Implementation

The feasibility of implementing the Action Plan within the stated timelines has been assessed by staff. Most of the proposed short-term actions are administrative or operational in nature and will be achieved using allocated resources. Staff will work to operationalize the actions through the existing departmental work plans immediately following the approval of the Action Plan.

Four of the proposed actions will require Council consideration:

- Consideration of delegation of approval authority
- Development permit exemptions for certain minor works
- Changes to PLUC procedures to allow applicants to address Council
- Changes to Council procedures to allow public hearing dates to be set on the same day as PLUC ratification, for some simple planning applications

For the first two items, Council has directed staff to consult on the consideration of delegation of approval authority and the exemption for certain minor works, and to report back to Council in November 2015. The third and fourth items regarding changes to Council procedures would be for consideration at Council's discretion.

There may be further feedback and direction that Council wishes to provide to amend or add to the Action Plan.

Staff propose to update Council on the status of the action items as part of the ongoing Quarterly Update Reports and to provide an annual update in February 2016 in advance of the 2016 Development Summit.

2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan

Objective 3: Strive for Excellence in Planning and Land Use; 2016 Outcomes: Reduced processing times for all types of applications from building permits to rezoning.

Impacts to 2015 – 2018 Financial Plan

The Action Plan proposes a number of short-term operational and administrative initiatives that will be incorporated into existing departmental work plans and budgets. Action 7 (expand Development Tracker) and Actions 14 (electronic submission of staff reports) will be considered through the 2016-2019 Financial Plan process.

Additional resource needs may be identified and requested for the Medium-Term Actions (2016 – 2018) through the 2017-2020 Financial Plan process.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Continued residential and employment growth is central to achieving the vision and objectives of the *Official Community Plan* (OCP). The *Action Plan* aims to reduce barriers to investment and development in Victoria by making land use applications and permit processes more effective and efficient.

CONCLUSIONS

The 2015 Development Summit provided an opportunity to build better relationships and understanding among the development industry, design professionals, Community Association

Land Use Committees, City Council and staff; identify concerns and problems as well as potential improvements; and then to put forward an Action Plan to outline key improvements in 2015-2016. The proposed Action Plan will provide strong direction to make the City's application processes more effective and efficient, and to continue to improve customer service and strengthen relationships.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrea Hudson
Assistant Director, Community Planning



Jonathan Tinney
Director, Sustainable Planning &
Community Development

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager: _____



Jason Johnson

Date: _____

October 8, 2015

List of Attachments

- Attachment 1 – Development Summit Action Plan
- Attachment 2 - 2015 Development Summit Final Report

2015-2016 Development Summit Action Plan

Focus Areas

Take an applicant-centered approach:

- Reduce application turnaround times
- Continue to improve customer service
- Build collaborative relationships among the development industry and the community associations

Estimated Time Savings

★ = Hours ★★ = Days
★★★ = Weeks ★★★★★ = Months

Short-Term Actions: July 2015 to July 2016

ACTIONS	MILESTONES	LEADS	ESTIMATED TIME SAVINGS FOR ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS
External Improvements			
1 Recommend revised options for Council to consider delegation of approval authority to staff for some types of development applications	Sept- Oct 2015: Consultation Nov 2015: Report to PLUC	SPCD	★★★★ Time savings of up to 2-4 months for eligible applications. To be considered by Council.
2 Recommend exempting certain minor works from requiring a development permit to reduce application volumes and streamline applications.	Sept- Oct 2015: Consultation Nov 2015: Report to PLUC	SPCD	★★★ Time savings of 6-8 weeks for limited number of applications. To be considered by Council.
3 Explore options and best practices for a fast-track system for building permits for certified third-party professionals and/or frequent customers.	Nov 2015: Best practices Feb 2016: Report to Council	SPCD	★★★ May save several weeks for eligible professionals.
4 Develop a "Planning 101" series for Community Association Land Used Committees and residents to provide a better understanding of Victoria's policies, land use procedures and development application processes. Look for additional ways to support and build capacity of Community Association Land Use Committees.	Nov 2015: Series concept Feb 2016: Launch series	CESP, SPCD	Variable. May save time for community review of some applications, particularly for complex projects



ACTIONS	MILESTONES	LEADS	ESTIMATED TIME SAVINGS FOR ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS
5 Create a Business Hub at City Hall in order to grow and streamline business and development processes in Victoria (Mayor's Task Force on Economic Development and Prosperity Draft Economic Action Plan)	Sept 2015: Review of Draft Economic Action Plan (EAP) Nov 2015 (TBC): Creation of Business Hub, immediately following EAP's approval	Mayor/City Mgr Office	Variable. Staff support will help applicants navigate City processes more efficiently.
6 Refresh the Sustainable Planning and Community Development section of the City's website to better meet customer needs, including easy-to-find contact information.	Jan 2016: Launch of revised website	CESP, SPCD	★ Information available at-a-glance; saves phone calls/emails to City Hall
7 Expand the Development Tracker to include development permit with variances and development variance permits. Initiate expansion to building, plumbing, electrical permits, and heritage alteration permits.	Feb 2016: Public launch for DVP and DP with variances Jun 2016: Launch for HAPs; initiate expansion to permits	SPCD, IT	★ Status updates available at-a-glance; saves phone calls/emails to City Hall
Internal Process Improvements			
8 Conduct a review of all City permit and planning application processes to simplify and streamline application processes, to include process-specific staff workshops and focus groups with applicants. Formalize intake procedures, targets and communication materials based on the complexity of the application. Implement identified solutions immediately where possible.	July 2015: Staff planning process review workshop Nov 2015: Staff permit process review workshop Jan 2016: Applicant focus groups	SPCD	Additional actions to determined
9 Promote and strongly encourage pre-application appointments for planning and permit applications, particularly for complex applications and applicants new to City processes. Include interdepartmental team attendance as appropriate.	Nov 2015: Update messaging to applicants	SPCD	★★ May lead to more complete applications, resolving of issues, less need for revisions.
10 Revise planning application forms to tailor the requirements to the complexity of the application.	Mar 2015: Revised forms for simple types of applications	SPCD, CESP	★★
11 Offer choice to applicants to collect public hearing fees when rezoning and variance applications are submitted to provide more certainty for costs and minimize the risk of public hearing delays (*fees would be refunded if application is declined and no public hearing is held).	Oct 2015: Implement	SPCD, Finance	★ Minimized risk of public hearing delay
12 Increase the frequency of the Technical Review Group meetings from bi-weekly to weekly.	Oct 2015: Implement	SPCD, EPW, Parks, Fire	★★★ 1 week time savings in some cases
13 Pilot post-submission meetings between applicants and the interdepartmental staff team to review Technical Review Group feedback and collaboratively resolve issues.	Nov 2015: Implement	SPCD	Variable. Facilitates proactive problem solving; less need for revisions later.
14 Develop a system for staff reports for Council to be reviewed and submitted electronically.	Dec 2015: Initial site launch March 2016: Additional changes	LS, IT	★★ Opportunity for concurrent review

Potential Time Savings

★ = Hours ★★ = Days
★★★ = Weeks ★★★★★ = Months

ACTIONS	MILESTONES	LEADS	ESTIMATED TIME SAVINGS FOR ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS
15 Identify the types of simple planning applications for which public hearing dates can be set on the same day that Council ratifies the Planning and Land Use Committee motion, instead of waiting for a later meeting.	TBD: For Council consideration	LS, SPCD, Council	★★★ 1-3 week time savings for eligible applications
16 Work with Council to explore changes in Council procedures to allow applicants to make a presentation to PLUC and/or respond to PLUC questions directly.	TBD: For Council consideration	Council, LS	★★★ In some limited cases, could reduce time needed for application revision/clarification by addressing Council questions at the time
17 Provide the option for developers to prepare some legal agreements after third reading (Public Hearing) of zoning amendment bylaw to achieve Public Hearings sooner.	Nov 2015: Commence immediately after Council approval of this action plan	LS, SPCD, Solicitor	★★★★★ Public hearing may be achieved 4 weeks to 4 months faster. Work for applicant deferred until later in process, if project is advanced by Council.
18 Update the Land Use Procedures Bylaw to reflect any administrative streamlining, as needed.	To be determined	SPCD	---

Potential Time Savings

★ = Hours ★★ = Days
★★★ = Weeks ★★★★★ = Months

Mid-Term Actions: August 2016 to July 2018

ACTIONS	MILESTONES	LEADS	POTENTIAL TIME SAVINGS FOR APPLICANTS
External Improvements			
20 Work with Community Association Land Use Committees to fine-tune the Community Association Land Use Committee process to support any administrative streamlining, while maintaining meaningful consultation. Consider instituting early-concept meetings between applicants, City staff and neighbourhood representatives	2017	CESP, SPCD	To be determined
21 Complete new local area plans to provide more certainty for the community and development industry.	2015- 2018 Oct 2015: Proposed timeline to Council	SPCD, CESP, Parks, EPW	To be determined
22 Update the zoning regulations concurrent with local area plan approval to eliminate conflicts and provide more clarity.	2015- 2018 Oct 2015: Proposed timeline to Council	SPCD, EPW, CESP	To be determined

23	Expand Development Tracker to include building, plumbing and electrical permit tracking, and heritage alteration permits.	Dec 2016: Complete	IT	To be determined
24	Expand the Development Tracker to include all other types of applications in addition to rezonings and development permits with variances.	2017-2018	IT	To be determined
25	Develop on-line applications for planning and permit applications, including electronic submission of revised plans during the processes.	2017	IT, CESP, SPCD	★ ★ May save trips to City Hall, need for circulating copies
Internal Process Improvements				
25	Examine current file processes and management, supporting a single point of contact at different phases of the application process, coupled with a formal file transfer protocol amongst staff to ensure continuity and applicant support.	To be implemented if further improvements are needed	SPCD	To be determined

On-Going Actions

Potential Time Savings

★ = Hours ★ ★ = Days
★ ★ ★ = Weeks ★ ★ ★ ★ = Months

ACTIONS	MILESTONES	LEADS	POTENTIAL TIME SAVINGS FOR APPLICANTS
26 Offer exit interviews and surveys to applicants to receive feedback and monitor progress as part of continuous improvement.	Underway	SPCD, CESP	To be determined
27 Promote the PlaceSpeak subscription service to provide notification of land use applications in a particular geographic area.	Underway	CESP	★ Status updates available at-a-glance; saves phone calls/emails to City Hall
28 Promote the Development Tracker tool, particularly as it expands to include some types of development permits.	Underway	CESP	★ Status updates available at-a-glance; saves phone calls/emails to City Hall
29 Use social media to communicate key Council decisions.	Underway	CESP	★ Status updates available at-a-glance; saves phone calls/emails to City Hall
30 Hold quarterly meetings with the UDI Liaison Committee. Initiate regular meetings and/or events with construction and design sectors.	Meetings planned for Sept 2015, Jan 2016 and May 2016	SPCD	To be determined
31 Hold an annual Development Summit with the development industry, design professionals, community representatives and City staff.	Planned for June 2016	SPCD, CESP	To be determined

Attachment 2

Working Together

Doing Business in the Capital City



2015 Development Summit Final Report



Introduction

This report summarizes what was heard at the event and outlines proposed actions identified at the 2015 Development Summit.

A status report on the Action Plan was presented to Council in May, 2015. At the same meeting, Council directed staff to host a second Development Summit in June 2015, with a particular focus on reducing timelines.

- Identify priorities for making the City's processes more effective and efficient
- Share perspectives to help each other understand the application approval processes
- Hear about changes made over the past year and discuss what's next

The 2015 Development Summit was designed to encourage people to hear from each other, first-hand, about the many different perspectives on the City of Victoria's development and permit processes. The invitation list was broadened this year to include design professionals (architects and landscape architects) and the construction and real estate industries. A much wider range of City staff also participated this year, representing all different stages of the approval process, to meet and hear directly from their customers and neighbourhood representatives. The format of the event – including a panel interview and small roundtable discussions with a mix of sectors at each table- also encouraged the sharing of different perspectives on the development and permit processes.

Attendees:

60	Development, design, business and real estate professionals
6	Community Association representatives
6	Mayor and Council
55	City staff, representing all facets of the application process

Summit Format

- After a welcome address from Mayor Helps, Andrea Hudson (Assistant Director of Community Planning) presented a progress report on the 2014 Development Summit Action Plan, highlighting key initiatives over the last year.
- A panel-style interview, moderated by Fran Hobbs, Chair of the Downtown Victoria Business Association, set the stage for the roundtable discussions. Panelists spent 40 minutes answering questions on their experience with City processes and sharing their suggestions for improvements. The four panelists represented different facets of the development process: Dusty Delaine (Amity Construction), David Chard (Chard Development Inc), Charles Kierulf (de Hoog & Kierulf architects) and Ian Sutherland (Downtown Residents Association).
- Participants, then spent an hour discussing three questions related to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of development application and permit processes. Tables featured a mix of staff, neighbourhood representatives, Council, development industry and design professionals, facilitated by a City staff person. Staff were full participants in the discussion.
- After final remarks, everyone was invited to stay and share any additional comments or questions with City staff. Participants could try out the new Development Tracker, which gives real-time updates on the status of rezoning applications (and was identified as an action at last year's Development Summit). Participants were also invited to give feedback on the new draft rezoning signs.

[Summit Agenda in Appendix B]

2: What We Heard

Panel Interview

The goal of the panel was to set the stage for smaller roundtable discussions later in the meeting by highlighting some of the different perspectives on Victoria's development processes. Questions from the moderator included:

- *Why do you choose Victoria, and why now?*
- *What is working with Victoria's approvals and permit process?*
- *Can you describe the role of the Community Association Land Use Committee in the application process, and what you think works well with the current process?*
- *Why is application/permit processing time so important to the success of a project and are there milestones in the process where timing is most critical?*
- *How does Victoria compare to other municipalities that you deal with?*
- *From your perspective, what are some of the factors that influence a Land Use Committee's timelines when reviewing a proposal?*
- *What is the single biggest thing the City could do from your perspective to make the land use application and permit process more effective and efficient?*
- *Do you have any advice for City staff?*



The following comments and suggestions were noted during the panel presentation:

- Customer service has improved dramatically, particularly for Permits and Inspections. Staff are more responsive. The turnaround times are shorter. Pre-meetings with all of the involved staff are helpful.
- Formalized pre-meetings for planning applications would be a good addition, with the entire interdepartmental staff team. This would allow a two-way dialogue for the developer to explain the project rationale with all staff who will be involved in the review.

- ## Roundtable Discussions

- Question One: Have you noticed any changes at City Hall over the last year?
- Question Two: As the City looks at ways to improve its land use and permit processes, what do you think is most important about the process, based on your own role or perspective?
- Question Three: What is one thing you hope that the City does this year to improve the application and permit processes?

Q1: Have you noticed any changes at City Hall over the last year?

1. There is a noticeable shift in attitude, and better customer service at City Hall.

- The most common answer to this question was that there has been significant progress in cultivating an “open for business” attitude, with an emphasis on customer service. The atmosphere at City Hall is more positive, friendly and welcoming. The corporate culture has shifted to be more positive toward development. Staff are more responsive to enquiries and focused on getting things done. People are greeted promptly, there is less need for appointments, and staff are easier to reach by email. Staff have a positive attitude and sense of empowerment which evokes trust with the public.

“A friendlier feeling overall at City Hall – provides a feeling that change is possible”

[There has been a] move from staff as regulators towards becoming facilitators

The tone and atmosphere is completely different – much more welcoming. You don’t feel like a nuisance any more.

2. The new Mayor and Council have prompted positive change

- Mayor and Council have a renewed energy, a focus on customer service and on meeting the needs of businesses. Mayor and Council celebrate community initiatives and are more timely in their discussions.

“Council recognizes that businesses are people and vice versa”

3. There is better public information

- The City’s use of web and social media to share information with residents and stakeholders has improved. There are more opportunities for two-way dialogue.

“Parking App is awesome – apply this technology elsewhere in city processes”

4. New technology is improving the experience

- There is a fresh outlook on how technology can be used. The Development Tracker is a helpful tool. Inspections in the field have gone digital. There is now live streaming of Council meetings. Some felt the City’s website has improved, while others find it difficult to navigate.

5. The permit application and approval process is smoother and faster

- Building permits are much faster than before. The process for tenant improvements, stripouts, blasting, demolitions and small permits has been streamlined. Application forms for permits are simpler. There is a more immediate response to building permit issues and questions. Pre-intake meetings are helpful in getting everyone on the same page.
- Meetings can be set up quickly, and City staff are working to be more collaborative and inclusive through the meetings. One unexpected impact is that the pre-application meetings can extend the timeline for smaller projects that might have just sailed through.

6. There have been some improvements for Rezoning and Development Permit applications

- Participants noted several changes but noted that there is still work to do. The new pre-application meetings for Rezonings and Development Permits takes time upfront but can result in save time and costs later on. There is increased level of complexity and detail required for rezoning and development permit applications, and several participants felt that this is causing delays.

7. Other changes noted in the last year:

- Staff have noted an increase in inquiries related to a lack of understanding of the Official Community Plan
- Changes to BC Building Code has created knowledge gaps with respect to installation and proper interpretation of codes
- Council reports are more detailed than previously

"I like that pre-app meetings are somewhat informal and that they are followed up with an email outlining the discussion and emerging directions"

Q2: As the City looks at ways to improve its land use and permit processes, what do you think is most important about the process, based on your own role or perspective?

1. Clarity and Consistency

- That timelines, processes and fees are predictable and consistent
- That application requirements are clear
- That applicants receive consistent information from different City staff
- That staff are empowered to make decisions and provide clear direction

"Customer service" is about meeting timelines, not just being polite.

2. Speed

- That turnaround times for processing applications are faster
- That there is timely communication and feedback
- That application packages are complete to enable faster review and processing times

3. More Dialogue

- That there is an opportunity to engage in discussion regarding issues that arise
- That different City departments work well together
- That there is good relationship and communication between the developer and City staff

What is most important: That decisions are made based on common sense. Not process for the sake of process.

4. Customer Service

- That customers are served in a professional manner
- That the City respects the business community's needs, and understands the cost implications of delays
- That applicants can easily contact staff with questions

What is most important: Respect for the business community and their contributions to Victoria. Time = money isn't about greed; it is about entrepreneurship, peoples' livelihoods, dreams, community vitality, culture.

5. Good Decisions

- That Council receives balanced and complete information
- That advice and decisions are based on common sense

6. Safety

- That development is compliant with codes in order to protect life, property and safety

Q3: What is one thing you hope that the City does this year to improve the application and permit processes?

Actions are presented in general order of priority, as identified through the voting described at the end of this question.

1. Delegate more authority to staff

- There was a strong desire to shift some decision-making from Council to staff and move decisions down where possible. Specific suggestions included delegating more authority to staff to issue Development Permits and Development Permits with variances; other suggested delegating smaller projects so that Council would be freed up to consider larger projects.
- A common theme was the desire for better clarity on the division of roles between staff and Council. Participants felt that professional staff could handle some of the decisions currently made by Council.

*Have qualified staff make as many decisions as possible
– move decisions down wherever possible*

2. Create a fast-track system for frequent customers

- There was support for creating a system where third-party professionals and/or regular customers are processed through a dedicated, fast-tracked approval stream. This would allow customers familiar with City processes to proceed quickly, and not to be slowed down by applicants with less experience and with potentially higher demands on staff time.

3. Develop clear steps and requirements for all application processes

- There is a desire for approval timelines, requirements, fees and processes to be transparent, clearly communicated and consistent from the beginning of the process. Participants suggested fixed timelines for planning applications, and potentially pre-booking meetings. Improve the City's website with clear information on processes, relevant regulations and policies, and who to contact.

Develop and communicate clear and fair expectations that are respectful

Create fixed time lines for planning applications

4. Formalize pre-application meetings for planning applications

- There was strong support for holding pre-application meetings with applicants and the full staff team for all land use applications. The meetings would discuss early concepts, identify potential issues and outline all steps of the process, and give applicants the opportunity to discuss the thinking behind the proposal with all staff members involved in the review. One suggestion was to also include neighbourhood representatives in these meetings.

Pre-intake: meetings give applicants information in order to make sound financial choices –what to expect next! No surprises!

5. Scrutinize all City processes

- There was a strong desire to examine all City application processes to find efficiencies, eliminate unnecessary steps and simplify the processes. Among the suggestions:
 - Simplify application forms
 - Match the application requirements to the scale of the project (less for simple projects)
 - Do some steps concurrently (e.g. CALUC review and first staff review)
 - Tie the permit process timelines more closely with the construction process
 - Reduce the number of times that revisions must occur
 - Allow the developer or architect to speak or respond to questions at PLUC meetings
 - Shorten reports to Council
 - Shorten public hearing process
 - Review mandate of Design Panel
 - Set metrics and meet them

Streamline, coordinate and integrate the community input and overall development application processes to improve timing – this will help save revision requirements

6. Continue to improve customer service

- Many people noted significant improvements to customer service in the past year. Among those areas that can still be improved: make it easier for customers to find out who to contact at City Hall, through an on-line directory or organizational chart. Expand the services provided by front line staff. Look at opportunities for on-the-spot issuance of permits. Establish one point-of-contact or file manager for each project. Provide extra support for customers with less experience with the development or permit process.

Ensure that employees are engaged, empowered, informed, recognized and rewarded for good work.

- While participants generally expressed support for keeping the CALUC process, there was a strong desire to re-organize and streamline the steps of the CALUC process and look for efficiencies. Among the common suggestions:
 - Encourage informal developer- community meetings at the pre-design stage, to get ideas and build a collaborative relationship. This can save time later.
 - Submit applications to the City either before or simultaneously with the CALUC meeting, so that revisions can be incorporated all at once
 - Add more feedback loops between the initial CALUC process and the public hearing
- Several participants suggested providing more training or City support for CALUCs, including having planning staff attend CALUC meetings
- Some people were concerned about the amount of influence given to local Community Associations, particularly where difficult decisions need to be made for the greater community good (e.g. increased density and growth).

11. Reduce regulatory barriers in key growth areas

- Several participants suggested removing barriers to develop in targeted growth areas by updating the Zoning Bylaw to align with the OCP, or incentivizing development through more flexible regulations in these areas.

12. Provide more support to existing and prospective businesses

- Some other individual ideas were proposed to make Victoria more “Open for Business”, such as establishing an Economic Development Office to proactively court potential tenants; reducing Development Cost Charges; and reducing parking standards.

Priority-Setting

At the conclusion of Question 3, each participant was asked to vote on which of actions discussed at their table was most important for the City to undertake over the next year. While there were differences in how the tables assigned votes, the results point to general trends.

Proposed Action	Number of Votes
Delegate more authority to staff	40
Create a fast track application stream for frequent customers	10
Change PLUC meeting procedures so that applicants can address, and answer questions, from Council	8
Set fixed timelines for processing applications	8
Simplify application processes	8
Introduce an early concept approval meeting that includes developers, community representatives and City staff	7
Reduce regulatory barriers to development in key growth areas	7
Maintain focus on improving customer services	6
Conduct a review of City processes	4
Increase staff resources to reduce turnaround times	3
Expand the on-line Development Tracker	3
Establish a staff person to help new applicants through the process	1
Change process so that developers meet with City prior to CALUC review	1
Reinforce that both staff and applicants have roles to play in meeting timelines	1

Next Steps

In consultation with staff across departments, the summary will be used to develop an Action Plan for improving the development process at the City of Victoria, with a focus on reducing timelines. A draft Action Plan will be presented to Council in August 2015.

Appendix A: Agenda

Annual City of Victoria Development Summit

Tuesday, June 23, 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm Victoria Conference Centre

Agenda:

1. **Welcome and Purpose:** (Mayor) 5 min
2. **Presentation:** *Progress report on Development Summit Action Plan* (Andrea Hudson) 15 min
3. **Panel Interview:** *What does the development approval and permit process look like for you* (Moderator: Fran Hobbs (DVBA) with Dave Chard (Chard Development Inc), Dusty Delaine (Amity Construction), Ian Sutherland (Downtown Residents Association), Charles Kierulf (de Hoog and Kierulf Architects) 50 min
4. **Introduction to Small Table Discussions** (Andrea) 2 min
5. **Small Table Discussions:** (facilitated by City staff) 50 min
 - *Have you noticed any changes over the last year?*
 - *From your perspective, what is most important to you about the land use application and permit process?*
 - *What do you hope the City will do this year to make the application and permit process more efficient and effective?*
6. **Concluding Comments and Next steps** (Andrea Hudson) 5 min
7. **Informal Q&A** - staff on-hand for questions and conversations for another 30 minutes. Demonstration of Development Tracker and new development application signs.

Appendix B: Summary of Roundtable Discussions

Overview:

In facilitated roundtables, participants were asked to discuss three questions related to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the City's development application and permit processes. Each table had a mix of staff, community association representatives, developers, designers and City Council. Participants wrote down initial answers on post-it notes. These were supplemented by facilitator notes and additional discussion. The following summary presents a consolidation of feedback heard at the roundtable, sorted by theme and sub-theme. In most cases the bullet points are verbatim, with some editing for clarity.

QUESTION 1: Have you noticed any changes?

Andrea Hudson presented a progress report that highlighted some actions since last year's Development Summit. We would like to get your feedback on these recent changes and any other changes you have noticed. Take one minute to answer the following on a post-it note: Have you noticed any changes at City Hall over the last year?

Improved Customer Service; Changed Attitudes

- Better access to information and access to staff
- Openness of customer service centre
- There's a renewed interest in making change happen
- Move from staff as regulators towards becoming facilitators
- Willingness of City to explore change / Ideas for change are welcomed
- significant progress in cultivating an "open for business" attitude
- Friendly helpful staff*
- More responsive to enquiries*
- More transparency which creates honest communication and accountability
- Big change since the last civic election. The tone and atmosphere is completely different – much more welcoming . You don't feel like a nuisance any more.
- Positive energy of staff focused on getting things done, more friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and more of a team spirit
- Quality of experience when dealing with staff (eager to help/answer questions)
- Quicker response time to questions
- Staff are easy to contact
- Engineering staff seem focused on [helping] to get projects going/approved rather than focused on the problems.
- Better customer service, e.g., greetings happen quickly (noted three times)
- Staff is open to discussion and refinements in approaches
- Improved customer service attitude

- Customer service/better sense of urgency
- Staff attitude and environment
- Emphasis on customer service has been a particular focus
- Positive attitudes working together to find solutions
- Increased staff confidence in making decisions
- Willingness to look “off island” for new ideas
- A friendlier feeling overall at City Hall – provides a feeling that change is possible.
- A positive corporate culture for new developments – staff and Council are becoming proponents rather than barriers
- Staff have a positive attitude and sense of empowerment which evokes trust with the public
- A more proactive approach to issuing Building Permits – sense that City is “Open for Business”
- Availability of staff has improved – everyone at the counter upstairs seems more likely to help someone approaching the counter, less need for appointments, and are easier to reach by email
- New staff with good attitudes
- The staff is more accommodating
- More professional environment
- Transparency, customer service

Collaboration

- Increased interdepartmental collaboration
- City is engaged and willing to work with UDI – now see UDI as a development industry conduit
- More staff brought in (liberated) for meetings, more early input and relationship building
- Shift towards a more collaborative and transparent and optimistic approach

Council/Mayor

- Mayor and Council celebrate initiatives from the community and are more timely in their discussions
- Council recognizes that businesses are people and vice versa
- Renewed Council energy
- New Mayor: Focus on customer service
- Mayor has been highly effective in removing obstacles for businesses such as improving processes and interpretation of regulations
- Like having Directors at all Council meetings to be able to answer questions and take away key directions from Council
- The clarity and transparency that has emerged through Council’s Strategic Plan process and Financial Plan/Operational Plan process

Public Communication/Engagement

- More community announcements to the public
- Proactive communications and ideas (social media, etc.)
- Increased community engagement
- Increase in quality of format, consistency, opportunities for 2-way dialogue



- City's use of web, social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders
- Decide on a consistent communication process (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, email)

Technology

- Digital inspections in field
- Fresh outlook; good job with technology
- Lots of new online tools, not sure if they are fully integrated though so as to maximize deployment value
- Website better and more detailed (Development Tracker) (mentioned twice)
- Live streaming of Council meetings
- Parking App is awesome – apply this tech elsewhere in city processes
- Business licence e-billing

Physical Improvements at City Hall

- Nicer looking space upon entering
- Customer Service Ambassador
- Most positive change was the addition the Customer Service Ambassador (mentioned by more than one person)
- The customer service parking on Pandora Ave is a “blessing”

Reports

- Eliminated redundant cover sheets on reports
- Council has asked for more info in reports
- Reports are more detailed

Public Inquiries/ Information needs

- More inquiries, lack of understanding of policies in the OCP in both the community and developers
- Biggest change is the complexity in the BC Building Code and we see some knowledge gaps in the development/construction industry with respect to installation and proper interpretation of codes

Improvements to Application Processes

Pre-Application Meetings

- Pre Check of applications at Development Centre are helpful when there are key representatives available from various departments – save time and money for the applicant
- Pre-application meetings with planner and whole team.
- Pre-app meetings take time however they can result in saved time and costs further on in the process

- ## Building Permits

- ### ***Development Permits***

- ### Public Hearings

- ### ***Application Forms/ Information Required***

- ### General

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Metrics

- Improved transparency (reporting metrics, tracking successes and failures) – UDI and stakeholders paying attention to metrics
- Permit process time commitment standards are published

No Change/ Negative Change

- There's been no real change, the application process is still the same and it's way too long
- More customer focus but slow changes and small steps with on-line/ development tracker.
- Longer wait times for Building Permits
- Phone responses not as friendly
- Changes to the BC Building Code that effect progress (not a positive change)
- Some had not seen changes (land use committees, don't necessarily come in to City Hall regularly)
- Process is largely unchanged however staff inactions involve a far more collaborative attitude

Take one minute to answer the following on a post-it note:

We are all involved in different ways in the development process – as community representatives, builders, contractors, architects, developers, Council and City staff. As the City looks at ways to improve its land use and permit processes, what do you think is most important about the process, based on your own role or perspective? For example, a planner might say that it is most important to them to have adequate time for the review of applications in order to evaluate them according to City policy and provide thoughtful recommendations to Council. A building inspector might say that it is most important to them that the plans comply with the BC Building Code.

- Consistency and transparency with time and process
- An exact timeline on a rezoning/development application
- Permit process has to be consistent from beginning to end
- Cannot change the rules halfway through the process
- Clear expectations of requirements, roles, timelines and challenges
- Predictability
- Permit approval and time frame should not depend on who (City Staff member) you're dealing with
- Having greater predictability with development application processes-some processes are clear while others are too subjective and not transparent
- Staff willingness to outline the processes, common stumbling blocks and how to successfully navigate through them
- Consistency of process between different projects and staff
- No surprises – continuity of staff and Council
- Clarity regarding criteria for decision-making: roles, responsibilities, variances, so expectations can be managed, accountability is clear
- Processes that are clear from the outset, concurrent where possible and it is clear who your contact person is at City Hall
- Clarity, clear expectations and clear roles. Clear process, policies, bylaws, communication, timelines. Clarity in general!
- Bylaws: well written, current, consolidated, easy to find and read
- Consistency. Ensuring that the process is consistent across projects. E.g. Each inspector should have the same requirements across the board, consistent with all applicants. Allows for small businesses to remain competitive with their competition. Don't make exceptions for some, and not all.
- Schedule/deadlines – set target review/approval milestones for each project. "Customer service" is about meeting timelines, not just being polite.



- Unexpected costs associated with development can increase cost of project therefore standards and predictabilities are important.
- Better communication re costs / fees associated with the application/development. Could all fees/costs live in one place so that the customer can understand these upfront? Currently many are surprised by some fees

Speed

- Application time frames need to be shorter
- Quicker timelines for those in the process waiting for permits to be issued (could this be facilitated through better interdepartmental collaboration?)
- Time is money
- A quick process*
- Timely advice on development proposals – empowering staff would enable this
- City to provide a “reasonable” turnaround timeframe to keep business of development moving
- For a developer: Certainty and fixed timelines for application processing
- Faster turnaround, and If not possible more open communication as to why.
- Council feedback early – regardless of support or not, identify Council concerns (affects timing)

Providing Excellent Customer Service

- Working with applicants who are responsive and professional
- Timely communication
- Meet customers needs in a professional, timely and accurate manner.
- To ensure that the zoning provisions are clearly communicated so the best development can occur
- Ability for planning clerks and front counter staff to make decisions and to provide clear direction and make decisions

Customer-Client Relationship

- Maintaining good working relationships with staff and developers
- Working relationship with the applicant and the planner - doesn't have to be a painful experience; having an open mind on both sides; pre-application discussions, meeting early and often
- Customer/client relationships*
- Be able to communicate between developer and community – plain language
- Be ethical, be clear, be fair, be a client to each other, share ownership of issues, be progressive

Understanding Development/Business Community Needs

- Respect for the business community and their contributions to Victoria. Time = money isn't about greed; it is about entrepreneurship, peoples' livelihoods, dreams, community vitality, culture.
- Consciousness of small business limitations and needs.



Collaboration Across Departments

- Interdepartmental collaboration, staff working together
- A team to meet with the developer to review plans together and identify any issues early.
- Communication between departments and providing clear answers to applicants i.e. Planning and Permitting speaking together
- That there is communication with staff from other departments, both informal and formal.
- Staff communicate with each other

Safety

- Most important: compliance to codes both in design phase (DP) and inspection to ensure building safety
- Life, property and safety

Staff Empowerment

- Council could benefit from trusting staff expertise and judgment
- Council needs to be comfortable with delegating tasks to staff

Achieving a Vision

- The cultural, economic and social success of the downtown. I want to see (and help create), a powerful, ambitious vision for downtown, with policies and procedures adapted to support that outcome

QUESTION 3: What changes would you like to see?

Based on what we have heard today, let's look forward to the next year. Take one minute to answer the following question on a post-it note: What is one thing you hope that City does this year to improve the application and permit processes? [One minute to write down answer] At the end of this exercise, participants were asked to vote (with dots) for the one action that they would most like to see implemented this year. Results are reported in the text below, and on page 12 of this report.

1. Delegate more authority to staff (Most common vote, across all tables)

- Allow staff to do more. Shift some decision-making from council to staff.
- More delegation to staff
- City staff need to be empowered to make application decisions (3 priority dots): Too much goes to Council for approvals
- Delegate more authority to staff to issue Development Permits and Development Permits with variances
- Development permit interpretation can be done at staff level use OCP or local area plan; Council can use that as an opportunity to infuse new policy into it; also staff can feel like they have been second guessed and it can't be good for morale;

- ### ***Clarify Council/Staff Roles***

- ## 2. Re-think the CALUC Process

- Successful consultation: developers come [to CALUCs] early, developers meet directly (A very strong desire to keep the preliminary meeting with the CALUC)
- Require input from neighbours prior to initial application process. Pro-active engagement
- Encourage developers to dialogue early
- Front-end consultation
- Doing the door-to-door engagement with the community is necessary for the developer to do – not necessarily a requirement that the City needs to regulate, but should be a suggestion
- Some developers/ designers start with collaborative community meetings before any plans are drawn. These are done pre-CALUC process, but don't count as community meetings. Then need to start all over with the CALUC. Can this be changed?
- A way for the community to be involved in the "process" of rezoning, not simply a one-off "event" which the CALUC meeting has become. Prior to CALUC process, developer had to involve community. Community could be involved at an earlier, conceptual stage, rather than

- Community discussion needs to precede rezoning process. Community consultation early in the process.

- Streamline, coordinate and integrate the community input and overall development application processes to improve timing – this will help save revision requirements
- Change the process so applications can be submitted before CALUC meeting
- Keep CALUC process. Move CALUC referral in the sequence: planners review design → CALUC meeting → incorporate all changes at once.

- Re-evaluate the CALUC process
- Concern about the amount of power given to Community Associations. Is Council thinking strategically about the greater good, or has this been handed over to the community associations? Sometimes difficult decisions need to be made for the greater good (e.g. increased density, strategic locations for growth), and this should be Council's role, even if the neighbours don't want it. Decisions about whether to retain the status quo or change should be a Council decision, not a CALUC decision.
- Remove CALUCs from the process as they are not official elected representatives of a community – this recommendation was identified in a City commissioned report from 2009 – why is City not exploring this recommendation?
- Explore ways that the City can better use CALUCS and their skills
- For CALUCs, no changes – meetings sometimes difficult to organize

3. Establish Formal Pre-Application Meetings with All Staff

- Pre-intake: giving applicants information in order to make sound financial choices –what to expect next! No surprises!
- Formal pre-application process
- Simplify our applications (e.g., by pre-application process meeting with reps from all areas, not just planners – people who actually review the plans, not managers)
- introducing an early concept approval meeting that includes developers, community reps and City staff
- City approval process has improved – great. It is still a complex process. Heritage Alteration, DP and VCHTIP can take 9 months to a year. Probably unavoidable – but better with joint meeting of all.
- Project start up: Issue identification before submissions. Discussion with planners. During discussions, have openness re costs of project: fees, processing time, changes.
- Preliminary intake meeting for DP/Rezoning Applications and early schematic “ideas” stage

4. Develop Clear Steps and Requirements for All Application Processes

- Consistency and transparency with time and process
- Smooth consistent permit process – better for all
- Develop and communicate clear and fair expectations that are respectful
- Clarity and certainty of requirements for approval process
- Consistency of requirements across project types, location and over time
- Clarity and consistency will improve timing of applications and processes
- For BP processing, Clearly identify engineering requirements

5. Create Fixed Time Lines for Processing Applications

- Create fixed time lines for planning applications (8 dots)
- The existing time lines are acceptable but keep to them by pre-booking dates for meetings, i.e., a road map of the process and time lines
- City to accommodate developer if overly long time taken for approvals

6. Create a Fast Track System for Frequent Customers

- Create a system where applications from Certified Builders are fast tracked or processed through a dedicated stream/group of staff. I have heard statistics that currently 30% of the applications are from private homeowners yet they take up 60-70% of staff time because they do not have proper information, are missing information and applicants are not experienced with the process...seems that City is putting resources in the wrong area and penalizing those that provide accurate and complete applications (this suggestion was highly favoured by group)
- Create Fast Track Application streams (3 priority dots)
 - City processes are too long
 - Should allow third party professional consultants to complete reviews and/or inspections instead of waiting for City Staff

7. Update City Bylaws and Policies to Provide More Certainty

- Better coordination of bylaws e.g. OCP and Highway Access Bylaw
- Sync the master plans, identify the conflicts and eliminate them
- Create a Comprehensive zoning bylaw rather than the mish-mash the City of Victoria currently has
- Local area plans will give an added and needed level of clarity. Very outdated.
- Speed up local area plans for all areas in order to give more clarity about what is expected/desired.
- Complete local area plans for all urban villages and transportation corridors. Both public and developers want more certainty.

New Regulations in Desired Growth Areas

- City has identified key geographic areas where they want to see more development –therefore City should facilitate and incentivize this opportunity through less or more flexible regulations in these areas – use carrot rather than stick approach (Suggestion was favoured by group)
- Zoning Bylaw to reflect OCP designations / or be consistent with OCP. Review Zoning Bylaw and embark on amending bylaw to reflect OCP. This would significantly attract investment and retain investment in the city

8. Scrutinize City processes

Simplify/streamline existing processes

- Find efficiencies in processes
- Conduct a business process review across the organization by consultant, and city commit to changes.
- Scrutinize every process for bottlenecks and pinch points. Make the application process faster. Streamline where possible.
- Become more efficient by getting rid of the many (usually small) unnecessary steps we take to move an application through
- Further streamline the process to reduce the number of steps and contacts with the City of Victoria
- Simplifying application process may expedite timeframes
- Simplified application process (eg some tasks could be done concurrently) THIS LAST ONE RECEIVED ALL EIGHT VOTES!

Do some steps concurrently

- Collapse the time frame for submissions. Could have concurrent appointments with team/caluc/notification/mailout/response. Doesn't need to be linear
- Tie the permit process more closely to the construction process. Understand the construction process so that the requirements tie in with those timelines.

Tailor processes to different types of applications/ permits

- Create opportunities for on-the spot issuance of permits at Development Centre such as Tenant Improvement



- ### *Allocate staff resources wisely*

- ### **Revise and Simplify Application Forms**

- ### Reduce requirements on the front-end

- ### Shorten Mail Out Timing

- ## Make Feedback Loops More Efficient

- ## Simplify Council Reports

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Review Design Panel Mandate

- Design Panel is a painful and adds costs to the project
- Design Panel: should be focused on specific staff questions not an overall/general review

Shorten Public Hearing Process

- Public Hearing process should be streamlined (shorter) – less steps

Set Process Timeline Targets

- Set turnaround time metrics and actually meet them
- Meet timeline goals 100% of the time.
- Commit to improving the percentage of applications that are processed within stated objective for time. It is a great start that you have objectives
- Create fixed goal and time lines for different types of applications
- Provide applicants with agreed-upon timelines when they submit – will be specific to project type

Be Clear about Fees

- Accurate indication of city charges so cheques can be written in advance (no changes at counter).

9. Continue to Improve Customer Service

Cultivate a Customer Service Attitude

- Make applicants feel more important and relaxed!
- Work to create trust
- Reward staff efficiency and decision making – create a sense of urgency
- Sense of urgency
- Establish/clarify service standards for applications to better manage customer expectations
- Maintain focus on customer service and include staff to staff in this focus. (2 priority votes)
- Re-ignite the passion and excitement in planners for their jobs. They don't seem to love their jobs anymore.
- Friendlier front line staff
- Front end staff difficult
- Phone responses not as friendly
- Ensure that employees are engaged, empowered, informed, recognized and rewarded for good work.
- Ensure staff have the tools that they need to do their jobs

Make it Easy to Find out Who to Contact

- No Staff directory – get contact list
- Publicly accessible and clear org chart



- Provide clear definition of staff duties and whom to contact for what purpose. Previously, it has all been achieved on knowing who to contact from past experience

Expand Services Provided by Front Line Staff

- Empower staff and front end staff to deal with more counter questions rather than taking time of Building Inspectors

Establish One Point-of-Contact for Applicants

- For Building Permit Applications, staff person acts as agent for a building permit application. One point of contact or someone assigned to the BP application. Back-up inspector for applications if an inspector is away.
- Designate one contact person for the whole process
- Ombudsman or Facilitator role: Facilitates permitting for business tenants, who often have limited understanding of real estate and of permitting
- City staff should create a resource person to help new people through the application process (1 priority dot)
- One stop shop for help with all applications
- One point of contact for all applications
- Cohesion needed when there is staff transition i.e. abilities, knowledge

Continue to Build Relationships

- Need more opportunity (investment) in relationship building between City, community and development
- Create more frequent opportunities for City to receive feedback from development industry and for City to report out on progress to improving processes...more than just annual Development Summit
- Advocacy and understanding of the roles of architects and CRP
- Recognize that the Applicant has responsibility on the ground, therefore staff should acknowledge and respect. Applicant also responsible for their own actions (staff, as Stewards of Cities cannot be liable for applicants performance).

10. Maximize the Use of Technology

Expand Development Tracker

- Implement and promote "My City" more completely across the board
- Online Application Tracker: Should send regular update emails to developers with applications in progress
- Continue to improve the online tracking program to provide an efficient system to process applications (e.g. Development Tracker)
- Add real-time update for status of proposals, DP, BP
- Improve development tracker

Improve Website



- The web site!!! – a lot of time could be saved in phone calls, emails even with a decent search function
- Website improvements

On-Line Applications

- On-line applications
- Online submission of applications – full digital start to finish
- Electronic submissions – would allow for reporting of metrics, simultaneous review, etc. Save paper and resources.
- More digital reviews. More staff can review at sometime as opposed to paper plans. More accumulation.

11. Other

- Adopt a “no bad buildings” policy – articulate a high level design expectation
- Standardizing zoning across municipalities
- Comprehensive zoning bylaw rather than the mish-mash the City of Victoria currently has
- Encourage innovative programs that encourage adaptive reuse of heritage buildings that preserve their historical features without making Victoria seem like a museum. (Support large enough floorplates for anchor businesses)
- Reduce DCCs (or other fees) for rental developments
- Reduce parking standards
- Eliminate the density bonus discussion
- Reduce the lead up times for report review for Council
- Establish an economic development office – available to meet with businesses, scouts. Send message Victoria is “open for business.” and proactively seeks anchor tenants for downtown. Commercial realtors direct clients to the easy commission – sites that already have zoning, one ownership. There is no similar entity promoting downtown. Portland Development Commission was mentioned by several as an example (arms’ length from City). Interest in reviving Downtown Retail Strategy, being pro-active, targeting retail streets for vibrancy, courting urban format retailers.