

# City of Vancouver

## Development Review Services

### Biannual Report, November 2002

## ***Streamlining the Development Review Process***

This August, a group of City planning and engineering staff sat down to study the development review process and to find ways to make it more “streamlined.” The goal of this group is to create an expedited permitting process, from submitting a land use application to scheduling a pre-construction meeting. Representatives from Public Works, Transportation, and Development Review Services kicked off this effort, discussing an expedited permitting process that includes the mandated steps, time for public involvement, and available resources.

Several subcommittees were assigned the task of more closely examining key points in the permitting process where delays can occur, including the review of applications for “completeness,” preparation of the City staff report and decision, and coordination between the land use and engineering reviews, which often are processed sequentially, as opposed to concurrently.

These subcommittees have reported their findings and recommendations to the larger group. A draft optional review process is complete and the committee is now working toward implementation. It is anticipated that the new optional process will be tested on a couple pilot projects to work out any “bugs” prior to general implementation.



# City Building & Development Activities

This mid-year report provides our customers current information about our activity levels through the first three quarters of the year. The report also includes a comparison of our current activity levels to those of the same time period last year.

The economy and development trends continue to transition. Our development activity levels have declined from the dramatic growth of the previous several years. Nonetheless, the regional construction economy is still relatively strong. In Vancouver, this is most evident in new single-family construction. In 2001 we issued 500 permits for new homes, down from a high of 1,200 in 1997. For the first nine months of 2002 we issued 313 permits for new homes. If this

trend continues, new home construction in Vancouver will decline this year.

New residential plat activity levels also indicate that new single-family home development is on the decline. During 2001, we received a total of 16 preliminary plat applications (both short plat and subdivision) representing the potential to establish 161 new residential lots. This is down from 201 applications in 2000. During the first nine months of 2002 we received 6 preliminary plat applications (both short plat and subdivision) representing a total of 62 residential lots. This trend will continue because the large parcels zoned for single-family residential are becoming fully developed, and is likely to continue until more vacant land is annexed or major redevelopment projects occur.

## Building Permits Issued, Valuation, Plans Reviewed, and Inspection Comparison January – September



	2001	2002
New Single-Family Homes	380	313
New Multi-Family Units	1186	479
Commercial Projects	634	551
Total Valuation in Millions	\$224	\$147
Total Building Permits	4027	4245
Building Inspections	30954	33234
Site visits/stops	8874	10193
Building Plan Review	1160	1124

The table above reports specific building permit, plan review and inspection information.

- ▶ **New single-family homes** shows the number of building permits issued for new single-family homes.
- ▶ **New multi-family units** shows the number of units approved for multiple-family development project building permits.
- ▶ **Commercial projects** shows the number of commercial building permits issued.
- ▶ **Total valuation** is the valuation of all buildings for which building permits issued.
- ▶ **Total building permits** is the total number of all residential new construction, alteration and additions, demolition, fire, grading, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, sign, and commercial/ industrial building permits issued.
- ▶ **Building inspections** shows the total number of inspections associated with a building permit that were conducted.
- ▶ **Site visits/stops** shows the number of visits to a site by an inspector to conduct an inspection or several inspections. An inspector may conduct more than one inspection during a site visit/stop.

## Planning Review Projects Received Comparison January - September

	2001	2002
Pre-applications	102	81
Preliminary Short Plats	7	3
Preliminary Short Plat Lots	15	9
Preliminary Subdivisions	5	3
Preliminary Subdivision Lots	108	53
Preliminary Site Plan Review	53	40
Boundary Line Adjustments	10	3
Conditional Use Permits	11	12
SEPA	34	30
Flood Plain Permits	9	6
Home Occupations	179	181
Misc. Zoning Reviews	311	315
Planned Unit Developments	2	2
Shoreline Permits	4	0
Variances	6	9
Wetland Permits	11	8
Appeals	14	15
Final Short Plats	5	7
Final Short Plat Lots	14	19
Final Subdivisions	6	4
Final Subdivision Lots	142	142

The table above shows all land-use applications received. The table also shows the number of lots approved by preliminary short plat and subdivision approvals and all lots established by final recorded short plats and subdivisions.

SEPA is the acronym for the State Environmental Policy Act. The SEPA numbers in the table indicate the total number of SEPA required checklists reviewed for the various development projects.

