Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – March 5, 2026

REPORTS

Item No. 9 End-to-End Review of the Development Process

WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Public Service be directed to report back no later than September 2026 on the feasibility of implementing Recommendation #19: Implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process, in time for referral to the 2027 budget process.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City of Winnipeg be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: End-to-End Review of the Development Process

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development - Executive Policy Committee - Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Initiative #7—Digitize and speed up Development and Permit Approvals—the City is working to make development approvals faster and easier. The goal is to make the process more efficient, simpler, and more consistent.

To support this work, the City hired consultants to do a full "end-to-end" review of the development process. This review looked at everything from when an application is submitted, to when it is approved, then inspected, and followed up on. KPMG was hired in early 2025 to complete this review.

KPMG's final report (the "Report") is included in Appendix A. The Report lists 27 recommendations to help the City review development applications more efficiently. See page 21 of Appendix A for the full list. It also describes common best practices used by other municipalities.

The recommendations are grouped into three types:

- Accelerating Changes (12 recommendations) short term
    - Moderate impact, build on and/or speed up improvements that are already in progress.
- Transformative Changes (5 recommendations) long term
    - High impact, requires significant effort and fundamental shifts in operating models.
- Supporting Changes (10 recommendations) medium to long term
    - Moderate to high impact, essential prerequisites for unlocking larger operation value.

The City's Project Working Group has done a high-level assessment to decide how to move forward. Out of the 27 recommendations, 12 have already been done in the past year or are planned to be actioned in 2026.

The Public Service are asking for Council direction to do a more detailed review of Recommendation #19: Implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process. The old Pre-application process was removed by Council in 2024.

14 recommendations will continue to be reviewed by the Public Service. If needed, the Public Service will report back to Council on these recommendations.

Three of the remaining recommendations should only be looked at after the zoning by-laws have been rewritten.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Public Service be directed to report back no later than September 2026 on the feasibility of implementing Recommendation #19: *Implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process,* in time for referral to the 2027 budget process.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City of Winnipeg be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On July 13, 2023, Council approved the City's application to the Housing Accelerator Fund and associated action plan which included Initiative #7 to Digitize and Facilitate Faster Development and Permit Approvals.

The Public Service are asking for Council direction to do a more detailed review of Recommendation #19: *Implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process*, as the old pre-application process was removed by Council in 2024.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

If Recommendation 1 is approved, the Public Service will bring back additional information for implementing Recommendation #19 from the KPMG Report.

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report, as any implications would be considered through the 2027 budget process.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Part of the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Initiative #7 to Digitize and Facilitate Faster Development and Permit Approvals, involves speeding up development processes to ensure they are efficient, streamlined, and effective. To this end, the City retained consultants to

undertake a comprehensive “end-to-end” review of the City’s development process from application intake to approval, subsequent inspection, and follow-up. On January 29, 2025, the End-to-End Review of the Development Process was awarded to KPMG.

An internal working group involving multiple City departments was set up to guide the work. The Review was focused on development and permit applications from application intake to approval, and subsequent inspection and follow-up. The objective was to ensure these processes are efficient, streamlined and effective; customer focused; clear and transparent; and support excellence in the built environment.

The Review focused on six different application types including:

- Development Application for Subdivision and Rezoning (DASZ)
- Development Application for Variance (DAV)
- Development Application for Conditional Use (DCU)
- Development permit applications
- Short Form Plan of Subdivision (DASSF)
- Building permits (inclusive of occupancy permits; focus on Part 3 multi-family permit applications)

Summary of KPMG’s Final Report

The findings included in the Report were informed by engagement with over 25+ industry representatives, external commenting partners (Province of Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro, and Teranet), 55+ City staff at all levels across multiple Departments, elected officials, as well as reviews of 130+ City documents and global leading practice with comparable Canadian jurisdictions.

Based on their findings, KPMG identified a number of strengths and challenges for the City’s development review process. For strengths, they noted that staff are widely recognized for their collaborative work, and many foundational business supports are in place, such as standard operating procedures; several technology-enabled workflows, and a maturing data collection and performance management framework. Through their discussions with management and staff, they also observed a strong desire for change and improvement across the City’s development review team.

For challenges, they identified some of the following examples:

- Insufficient staffing and resourcing capacity;
- Inconsistent and at times ineffective processes;
- Sometimes poor application quality;
- Informal process-wide governance;
- Insufficient cost recovery;
- Inconsistent use of technology platforms / digital solutions; and
- A lack of comprehensive performance management framework.

Using this information, KPMG conducted a maturity assessment of the City’s development review process. The maturity assessment is a structured evaluation. It evaluates the relative maturity of the City’s development review processes across an assessment framework which includes six layers – Processes; Organization, People and Culture; Technology and Information;

Stakeholder and Staff Experience; Performance Management and KPIs; Legislation and Policy. Based on KPMG's findings, the City's development review process consistently scored between 2 and 2.75 across each layer (see page 107 of Appendix A for a summary of the maturity assessment). For context, 1 is considered "informal" and 5 is considered "Optimized."

KPMG identified 27 recommendations to address these challenges which they classified into three different categories as follows (see page 21 of Appendix A for full list of recommendations).

1. **Accelerating Changes**

Accelerating changes are moderate-impact initiatives designed to build on and speed up improvements that are already in progress within the organization. These changes typically require less effort to implement because they leverage existing work and established frameworks. Their timing can vary, but they are often already underway and intended to quickly deliver benefits while integrating seamlessly into ongoing operations.

While similar to supporting changes, accelerating changes are generally lower in effort, focusing on minor policy tweaks, adjustments to current delivery models, or training on new processes. Many of these recommendations are already scoped and being implemented by the City.

Some of the recommendations in Accelerating Changes include:

- Conducting a comprehensive zoning by-law modernization exercise to align with current development objectives;
- Consolidating the Building Permit and Development Permit intake and review workflows to improve applicant experience; and
- Expanding the use of digital dashboard reporting and increasing transparency for applicants.

2. **Transformative Changes**

Transformative changes are high-impact initiatives that drive city-wide or multi-departmental improvements in service delivery, outcomes, or user experience. These changes require significant effort, often involving the introduction of new technologies or platforms, fundamental shifts in operating models, and substantial capital or resource investments. Their implementation is typically long-term, spanning 18 months or more, and is structured around phased milestones to ensure sustained progress. Most transformative changes are either entirely new to the organization or exist only as pilots or conceptual projects, representing bold steps toward future-ready operations and enhanced public value.

Some of the recommendations in this category include:

- The adoption of application streaming at intake based on application quality and alignment to existing City policies and development goals;
- Establishing a Planning Commission with delegated authority to review and approve development applications; and
- Adopting technological solutions to enable automatic application screening and support preliminary review.

3. **Supporting Changes**

Supporting changes are moderate to high-impact initiatives that often serve as essential prerequisites for unlocking larger organizational value. These efforts typically involve process redesigns, system integrations, or targeted hiring, requiring a medium level of investment and coordination. Implementation is expected to occur over a mid-term horizon, generally spanning six to eighteen months, allowing for meaningful progress while aligning with broader transformation goals. Supporting changes may be entirely new or designed to extend and standardize existing initiatives, ensuring alignment and consistency across departments and functions as the organization evolves.

Some of the recommendations in this category include:

- Work with industry to review post approval processes for development applications and identify opportunities for efficiencies.
- Developing clear public-facing user guides and terms of reference for all the City's development application types;
- Implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process; and
- Establishing a formal performance management framework.

Next Steps – Implementation Plan

It's important to note that while the Review was underway over the past year, the City's commitment to continuous improvement in development review continued and some major improvements were implemented that relate to the KPMG recommendations.

Seven recommendations (#1, #2, #5, #9, #10, #12, #20) from KPMG's report have been implemented or addressed within the last year through the following improvements:

- The introduction of a Rapid Response Process to facilitate quicker response times to Water and Waste development inquiries.
- Changes to the zoning by-law that make it easier to develop "missing middle housing" city-wide as well as intensification at mall sites and along major corridors.
- In December 2025, the City engaged consultants to undertake the Comprehensive Zoning By-law review.
- The introduction of a concurrent submission and review option for Development Permit and Building Permit applications to assist with reducing sequential processing times for these applications. This process was launched as a pilot in March 2025 and has now been fully implemented in Permits Online. The pilot launch showed average days from intake to issuance for concurrent permits decreased by 50 percent.
- Eliminated the need for a pre-requisite Development Permit for a number of minor development types. To date, 36 project types have been identified and are exempt from Development Permits and may proceed directly to the Building Permit stage. Property, Planning and Development (PPD) Department implemented two rounds of Development Permit exemptions. The first round, launched in March 2024, identified 25 low-risk project types. A second expansion in September 2025 increased the total to 36 exempt project types. Collectively, these exemptions reduced Development Permit application

volumes by approximately 32 percent. This reduction translated to an average savings of 5 to 16 business days per application from intake to issuance and reduced internal processing demand by an amount equivalent to approximately 1.3 full-time positions. PPD is advancing a further round of Development Permit exemptions for March 2026, bringing the total to 41 project types.

- PPD mentorship program was launched in late 2025.
- The expansion of the Permits Online customer portal to include all residential and commercial building and trade permits as well as all development permits.
- The launch of a redeveloped Permits Online portal, which is accessible, mobile-friendly, and user-friendly.
- The digitization of development applications. This facilitated the move from a paper-based system to electronic processing in AMANDA (the City's application database) and allowing applicants to apply through Permits Online, as opposed to requiring in-person drop-offs with six printed copies of submissions. Further enhancements are being implemented in 2026 to improve efficiency.
- PPD is revising its Status of Title (SOT) requirements in order to reduce avoidable application deficiencies and improve intake. Previously, Development Permits and Applications were required to include an SOT issued within 3 months of the application. Analysis showed that approximately 30 percent of residential applications were deemed incomplete because the SOT exceeded this three month threshold. To address this, the City extended the allowable age of an SOT from three to six months. This improved first-pass completeness at intake and reduced re-submissions.
- Departmental web content is being rewritten and migrating to the City's new website. The new site is organized around services and topics rather than departments, making it more intuitive for users. In accordance with Council direction, all content is being updated to meet the City's plain language standards.
- Improved the Public Notices website to expand types of notices available, increasing transparency and accessibility for residents.

Looking ahead to the implementation phase, the interdepartmental Project Working Group for the Review completed a high-level assessment of the recommendations to determine how best to proceed with implementation (Appendix B provides an overview of this assessment).

The group determined that while many of the recommendations required further review/assessment noting the resourcing and budgetary considerations involved, there were seven recommendations that were underway or would require minimal additional resources to implement or advance in 2026 including:

- #4 Require an upload memo be used to accompany a re-submitted application.
- #6 Introduce training for Councillors to better equip them for their roles in the development review process
    - PPD Urban Planning has offered training to Councillors in the past following elections. This can be continued and expanded upon to include inputs from other divisions/departments.

- #7 Expand the use of digital dashboard reporting to incorporate additional development review metrics
    - Building Permit volume reports were implemented online in September 2025. The information on the permit statistics webpage will be expanded in 2026 to display the development permit volumes and activity to support the needs of industry
- #9 Expand the use of online submissions for all development applications to streamline applications submission processes, digitalize workflows, and enable real-time application specific updates and information.
- #10 Adopt a fully integrated digital workflow management system to improve efficiency and consistency in the processing of development applications
    - Following the Digitization of land development applications, City Clerk's Department staff will be integrated into the City's internal AMANDA system in 2026.
- #11 Refresh and increase use of digital templates in AMANDA system.
    - Will be improved and enhanced in 2026.
- #18 Work with industry to review post approval processes for development applications and identify opportunities for efficiencies.
    - In early 2026, the City signed on to co-lead a process to review post-approval efficiencies in partnership with the Urban Development Institute.

Prioritization of Recommendation #19: Implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process:

KPMG recommends the City introduce a new Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation (VPSC) process for both development applications and permit applications. KPMG noted this is recognized as a leading practice, as it allows for the review and screening of potential incoming applications, establishes initial lines of communication with applicants, and identifies critical issues before formal submission. They noted that all three comparator cities (i.e., Edmonton, Hamilton, and Ottawa) researched as part of the review offer a voluntary pre-application process.

While the City previously had a pre-application process, it was removed by Council in 2024. The old process, while voluntary, was perceived to be required in many cases and the comments provided by the Public Service in the final feedback letter were sometimes considered unclear and not always helpful to applicants. Since the removal, the WWD has also implemented a new rapid response process for servicing inquiries. If the City were to implement a new pre-submission process, it is recommended to be strictly voluntary and include more application types. It would differ from the previous process in that it would include a meeting attended by relevant City staff reviewers, as well as consultants and designers from the applicant's team, to provide clarity on critical aspects of the application.

Noting the previous pre-application process was removed by Council in 2024, the Public Service is looking for Council concurrence to review and report back on Recommendation #19.

Recommendations for Future Consideration:

There are 14 recommendations that require further review and assessment. These recommendations can be considered by Departmental staff through engagement of process Improvement teams and brought back for Council direction in future as appropriate.

Three of these recommendations should only be addressed following the completion of the Zoning By-law re-write, as they are so closely linked to the contents of the zoning by-law. These include:

- *#16: Adopt technological solutions to enable automatic application screening and support preliminary review;*
- *#17: Establish a Planning Commission to delegate approval authority for development applications; and*
- *#21: Develop clear public-facing user guides and terms of references for all the City's development application types.*

In the case of Recommendation #17, on March 11th, 2025, Council approved the following recommendation in relation to the *City of Winnipeg Governance Review*:

> *That prior to the consideration of the establishment of a Planning Commission, the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to Council one year after the completion of the Winnipeg Zoning By-laws rewrites, with an analysis on changes which impact the development application public hearing process.*

Conclusion:

In summary, the internal Project Working Group completed a high-level assessment to determine how best to proceed with implementation. Out of the 27 recommendations, 12 have either already been delivered in the past year or are planned to be implemented or advanced in 2026 using existing resources or minimal additional resources.

The Public Service are asking for Council direction to do a more detailed review of Recommendation #19: *Implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process*, as the old Pre-application process was removed by Council in 2024.

Noting that most of the recommendations primarily fall under the work of the Planning, Property and Development Department, it is recommended that implementation be led by this department with involvement by other departments as required. The remaining 14 recommendations can be considered by Departmental staff through engagement of process Improvement teams and brought back for Council direction in future as appropriate.

The Public Service anticipates that the long-term efficiencies will be realized with the ongoing streamlining of processes, by-right development and updated zoning By-laws. Those efficiencies will require the re-prioritization of staff and resources.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: February 13, 2026

Project Name:
End-to-End Review of the Development Process

COMMENTS:

Twelve of the KPMG recommendations can be implemented or advanced using existing resources. Fifteen of the recommendations will require further scoping by PPD and will need to be considered within a future budget process. As it stands, there are no financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

Randy Bernard

Randy Bernard, CPA
Manager of Finance & Administration (Campus)
Corporate Finance Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Property, Planning and Development
- Public Works
- Water and Waste

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Leadership and Good Governance
3. Achieve community-responsive service delivery through an aligned, integrated, collaborative and results-oriented organizational culture.

Economic Prosperity
1. Ensure transparent and predictable conditions are in place to support desired business growth through attraction, investment, and retention

City Building 1.4 Integrated Knowledge and Resources
Coordinate inter-departmental systems, projects and resources, making the best use of internal and external expertise to better understand service needs,

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to any of the specific Goals and Objectives in the PRS and it was determined that the PRS is not applicable to this specific report.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by: Elise Finnigan, RPP, MCIP
Date: February 6, 2026
File No: N/A

Attachments:
Appendix A – KPMG Final Report: “End-to-End Review of the Development Process”

Appendix B – Summary of High-Level Assessment of Recommendations by Project Working Group.