REPORTS

Item No. 19 Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation and Post Application Approval Update

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development recommended to Council:

1. That an extension of time to January, 2027 be granted for the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development to submit a recommendation on the matter.

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

Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – September 9, 2026

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Broawty,
That the following be recommended to the Executive Policy Committee and Council:

1. That an extension of time to January, 2027 be granted for the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development to submit a recommendation on the matter.

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

Carried

COUNCIL DECISION:

On March 5, 2026, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development and adopted the following:

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 Review Process.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation and Post Application Approval Update

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

At its meeting on March 26, 2026, Council directed the Public Service to report back on the feasibility of introducing a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process. Council also directed that the report be completed in time to be considered during the 2027 Budget Review Process. This direction came after KPMG reviewed the City of Winnipeg's development approval process and recommended bringing back a pre-application process.

This report describes a proposed Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process. If Council approves it through the 2027 Budget Review Process, the Public Service would start the program in the second quarter of 2027. The process was developed with feedback from City departments, industry groups, developers, and consultants. This was done to make sure it works for both applicants and the City.

The proposed process would replace the former pre-application process. To support the new program, the recommendations in this report would require changes to Schedule A of the Planning, Development and Building Fees By-law No. 66/2016. These changes would create fees for Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation applications.

The Public Service will report back no later than September 2028 on the status of the program, including number of applications received, staff resources required, and response times.
The report also includes an update on KPMG's recommendation to review the post-approval process. After consultations with the development industry, the Public Service is proposing several changes to make requirements simpler and help applications move through the approval process more quickly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the following fees for a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process be referred to the 2027 Budget Review Process for consideration:

    A. $3,000 for a high-level submission; or

B. $4,000 for submissions that request a Zoning Analysis and detailed site plan comments

2. That, subject to the approval of the fees identified in Recommendation 1 through the budget process, the Voluntary Pre-Submission process be approved for implementation.

3. That the Public Service be directed to report back no later than September 2028 on the status of the program, including number of applications received, staff resources required, and response times.

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

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On March 26, 2026, Council directed the Public Service to report back no later than September 2026 on the feasibility of implementing Recommendation 19 from the KPMG “End to End Review”: Implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process in time for referral to the 2027 Budget Review Process.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

If the recommendations of this report are concurred in, the request to implement a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process, with an associated fee of either $3,000 for a high-level submission or $4,000 for submissions that request a Zoning Analysis and detailed site plan comments, will be referred to the 2027 Budget Review Process.

Subject to Council approval of this request, Schedule A of the Planning, Development and Building Fees By-law No. 66/2016 will be amended to include the new Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation fees effective April 1, 2027.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Background / End-to End Review of the Development Process

End-to-End Review Process
As part of Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Initiative #7, "Digitize and Speed Up Development and Permit Approvals," the City retained KPMG in early 2025 to complete an end-to-end review of the City’s development approvals process. The review resulted in 27 recommendations to improve efficiency, consistency, and predictability of development application reviews and processing. Of the 27 recommendations, 12 are already underway or completed, while the remaining 15 require further review.

One of KPMG's recommendations was to introduce a Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation (VPSC) process, recognizing it as a leading practice that allows applicants to receive coordinated feedback and identify potential issues before submitting a formal application.

In response to this recommendation and Council's previous direction, this report presents a proposed framework for a new Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation process. The proposed framework is intended to provide applicants with a clear, optional opportunity to receive coordinated feedback early in the development process, helping to improve application quality and support more efficient review of formal applications.

Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation (VPSC)

External Consultation

Prior to preparing the framework for the VPSC, the Public Service (from across City departments) consulted with a range of developers, consultants, and industry stakeholder groups. The purpose of this engagement was to gather feedback from infill and greenfield developers, consulting firms, and industry associations to help inform how the Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation application would be structured and applied in the future. Through these consultations, several key themes emerged:

- VPSC process must be voluntary.
- VPSCs are particularly valuable for two main purposes:
  1) providing a high-level plausibility check during the project due diligence phase; and
  2) providing a more comprehensive review of a detailed proposal as part of broader project planning.
- A feedback timeline of one to one and a half months was identified as appropriate, with a preference for timelines closer to one month.
- Coordination among City departments in the VPSC letter is important.
- Consistency between VPSC feedback and the requirements or expectations at the time of formal submission is essential.

Proposed VPSC Overview

The VPSC is a proposed optional application that allows applicants to receive early, coordinated feedback from City departments before submitting a formal application. Its purpose is to improve application quality, reduce project risk, and provide greater certainty early in the planning process.

A VPSC may be submitted for any site, regardless of the type of development being proposed. It can be used for projects that will require future planning approvals, such as a Rezoning and/or subdivision, or for projects that only require a development permit. The VPSC is available broadly but is most useful for projects with potential planning or servicing complexities.

Consultation with applicants and industry identified two primary reasons for requesting a VPSC. Some applicants want a high-level assessment to help determine whether a project is feasible before investing significant time and resources. Others are seeking more detailed feedback to refine a proposal that is already well developed. To accommodate both needs, the Public Service has developed a single application framework that supports either approach.

Subject to Council approval, VPSC applications will be submitted through Permits Online. To be considered complete, an application will likely need to provide the following information:

Required

- A Letter of Authorization (if applicant is not the property owner).
- A Status of Title.
- City of Winnipeg Caveats (if applicable).
- A Letter of Intent / form describing:
    - The project address.
    - The proposed use, project description (including approximate construction start date), and if any zoning changes are proposed.
    - The building floor area, height, and construction type.
    - If residential, the number of dwelling units.
    - If commercial or institutional, the estimated occupant load.
    - If industrial, the estimated occupant load, water demand and wastewater generation.
    - Any questions the applicant wishes to have addressed, up to 15 questions for the $3,000 application and up to 25 questions for the $4,000 application.
- A basic site plan showing:
    - Proposed approaches.
    - Building locations including setbacks from property lines and between buildings.

Optional for enhanced review

- Detailed site / building plans.
- Landscape plans.
- Request for Zoning Analysis.
- Garbage / refuse location.
- Vehicle tracking.
- Internal road locations and dimensions.
- Overhead doors.
- Additional Items as available.

The Public Service will prepare detailed submission requirements for the VPSC that will be posted online along with current submission requirement forms on the City's PPD website.

The required information provides the City's servicing departments with the information needed to identify high-level servicing considerations and constraints. They also allow the Urban Planning and Design Division to provide preliminary comments including policy alignment on the proposed zoning and the general supportability of the proposal. Together, this feedback gives applicants high level information regarding a proposal's feasibility that they can use to make informed decisions before submitting a formal application.

Applicants seeking more detailed guidance may choose to submit detailed site and building plans and request a Zoning Analysis. This enables the Public Service to provide more comprehensive comments on the proposed development, including feedback on potential site plan issues and planning approvals.

Service Standards

The Public Service is targeting a five-week review period for VPSC applications that do not include a Zoning Analysis and detailed site reviews. This review period begins once all required application materials have been submitted and the application fee has been paid. Within five weeks, the applicant will receive a letter outlining the coordinated feedback from the Public Service.

For applications requesting a Zoning Analysis and detailed site review, the targeted review period is six weeks. The additional time is intended to allow for the preparation of a Zoning Analysis, for the application to be more closely examined, and for a comprehensive response letter to be prepared for the applicant.
To avoid an overly lengthy back and forth question loop between the applicant and City staff the VPSC application will be considered closed once the Feedback letter has been issued.

Fees

Two application fees are proposed to recover the staff time required to complete pre-submission reviews.

A flat fee of $3,000 is proposed for applications seeking high-level feedback on project feasibility that does not include a Zoning Analysis and detailed site plan review.

A flat fee of $4,000 is proposed for applications that include detailed site plans, request a Zoning Analysis, and seek detailed comments on the proposed site plan. The higher fee is intended to recoup the cost of a Zoning Analysis and additional review time.

VPSC Process and Deliverables

The process map for a VPSC is as follows:

1. Applicant, outlined in their Letter of Intent / application form determines whether they want:
    - High-level servicing feasibility feedback, or
    - Detailed Zoning Analysis and Planning Review feedback in addition to servicing feasibility.
2. Applicant submits VPSC application through Permits Online with required documents.
3. Public Service screens submission for completeness and confirms the applicable fee.
4. Applicant pays the fee.
5. Once completed and paid, the application is circulated to relevant City departments.
6. Departments provide coordinated comments.
7. Public Service issues a consolidated response letter within the target timeline.

At the conclusion of the review, applicants will receive a coordinated response letter that summarizes comments from all participating departments. Depending on the level of review requested, the letter will identify:

- Servicing requirements and constraints.
- Planning policy considerations.

- Applicable zoning regulations.
- Key issues that should be addressed before submitting a formal application.
- Where requested, a preliminary zoning analysis identifying potential variances or zoning compliance issues.

A VPSC does not constitute an approval, does not bind future decisions of Council or delegated authorities, and does not replace the review undertaken through a formal development application. Comments provided are preliminary and based on the information submitted.

Implementation

If Council approves the VPSC program, the Public Service intends to implement the VPSC in the second quarter of 2027. While a VPSC does not shorten statutory approval timelines, it is intended to assist developers conducting due diligence, improve application quality, and reduce requests for additional information by the Public Service at the time of a formal application, resulting in a more efficient review process.

Within one year of implementation, the Public Service will consult with the stakeholders engaged during the development of the program to evaluate its effectiveness. Feedback received will be used to identify opportunities for improvement and, where appropriate, refine the program to better meet the needs of applicants and stakeholders.

The Public Service will report back no later than September 2028 on the status of the program, including number of applications received, staff resources required, and response times.

Existing Pre-Application Meetings

Planning and Zoning Staff Meetings

Before submitting a development application, such as a Variance, Rezoning, or Conditional Use, applicants are encouraged to meet with an area planner. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss the applicable policy framework and determine whether the proposed development is generally supported by the Urban Planning and Design Division based on City policies, such as *Complete Communities 2.0* and local secondary plans if applicable. Early discussions help applicants understand the Public Service's position before investing time and money in detailed designs or formal applications.

Applicants are also encouraged to meet with a Zoning Development Officer before submitting a development application. These free meetings focus on the application process, including submission requirements and the documents needed for a complete application. The meetings are intended to help applicants prepare complete submissions and reduce the likelihood of an application being delayed because required information is missing.

Plan Examination Staff Meetings

The Plan Examination Branch currently offers in-person meetings in advance of making a building permit application. This is separate from development applications and is intended to address building code considerations to ensure compliance with the building code and resolve any issues in building design.

Post Approval Processes (Recommendation Update)

In addition to the VPSC, KMPG also recommended the Public Service work with the development industry to identify opportunities for process improvements once a development application was approved by Council. The Public Service, in collaboration with the Urban Development Institute, hosted several brainstorming sessions in the Spring and Summer of 2026 that were facilitated by Landmark Planning. The sessions were extremely productive and positive, resulting in numerous proposed changes which are administrative in nature. A number of improvements, including but not limited to providing detailed approval checklists, amending report templates and increasing the use of digital signatures will result in development time reductions and/or enhance the development process.

Beginning in Fall 2026, the Public Service will also implement a pilot program where experienced greenfield developers apply to an advertised program that expedites certain land development processes with a goal toward reducing overall timelines. The program involves a transfer of risk from the City to the developer, and the pilot will allow the Public Service to assess whether the program should be delivered to a larger audience.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: July 23, 2026

Project Name:

Voluntary Pre-Submission Consultation and Post Application Approval Update

COMMENTS:

As the report recommends referral to the 2027 Budget Review Process, there are no associated financial implications. Should Council ultimately approve the implementation of VPSC process, the financial implictions will be immaterial and no budget adjustment will be required.

Mike McGinn July 23, 2026
Mike McGinn, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Water and Waste
- Public Works
- Winnipeg Transit

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

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, find the most appropriate solutions, optimize resources, and maximize community outcomes.

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 the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and its Goals and Objectives, and it was determined that the PRS is not applicable to this specific report.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Planning, Property and Development
Division: Urban Planning and Design
Prepared by: Dylan Chyz-Lund, RPP, MCIP
Date: July 29, 2026
File No: N/A