

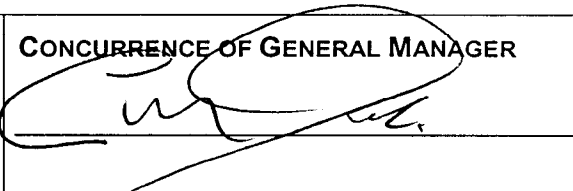


To: Planning Committee Date: November 5, 2003  
 From: Joe Erceg File: 4105-01  
 Manager, Development Applications  
 Re: **Expedited Process for Development Applications**

**Staff Recommendation**

That Bylaw No. 7622, amending "Development Application Fees Bylaw No. 7276" to include a new \$1,000. fee for expediting zoning amendments and Development Permits effective January 1, 2004, be introduced and given first, second and third reading.

  
 Joe Erceg  
 Manager, Development Applications  
 HB:blg

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
City Clerk.....	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Law.....	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

## Staff Report

### Origin

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline steps that have already been taken to expedite development applications and to propose a new “fast track” option for relatively simple rezoning and Development Permit applications.

#### Council Term Priorities

One of Council’s goals for the 2003 – 2005 term is:

**“To increase customer service and satisfaction levels through improved communications, increased choices, and improved responsiveness and turn around times”.**

To measure success in achieving this goal, Council indicated that:

***“There will be improvements in response and turn around times for City services, including a fast tracking development process (at applicants costs) for simple land development projects”.***

#### Project “Why Not?”

The Urban Development Division is currently undergoing a major review entitled **Project “Why Not?”**.

Included in this review are the following projects:

- **fast tracking** (e.g. examine having developers pay for the extra time to expedite an application; review the fee structure for fast-tracked development applications; establish fast tracking procedures; review existing fast tracking processes);
- **baseline project** (i.e. consultant to benchmark existing timelines for various Urban Development Division processes in 1998 and 2002 in comparison to other Lower Mainland municipalities); and
- **identify and analyze Front of House processes** (e.g. streamline applications and how the City handles them; look at the process via process mapping; educating clients and staff on our processes; etc.).

This report addresses the fast tracking project and has been reviewed by the Team responsible for this project.

The proposed fast tracking option has also been reviewed and agreed to by the Urban Development Institute (UDI) and the Greater Vancouver Home Builders Association (GVHBA).

If endorsed by Council, the Fast Tracking Team will prepare the necessary information brochures for the public and roll out the new process to the development and building community.

## Findings of Fact

### Development Applications Process Review

In 1999 – 2000, the Development Applications Department undertook a major review of the rezoning, Development Permit and subdivision processes as part of the strategic initiative to “*Blow Out Bureaucracy*”.

This review involved selected developers in roundtable discussions and a questionnaire survey.

As a result of this review, the following methods of expediting development applications were implemented:

- ✓ applications are reviewed by staff upon receipt and the applicant is advised of any initial comments/requests for further information at the outset rather than later in the process;
- ✓ timelines and target dates for the processing of an application are established with the applicant on major or time sensitive proposals;
- ✓ minor rezoning applications which comply with the Official Community Plan and City Policies (e.g. Single-Family Lot Size Policy, Lane Policy; Arterial Road Redevelopment Policy; etc.) are circulated to a minimum of staff;
- ✓ some Development Permit applications are not required to be presented to the Advisory Design Panel or to provide a model if they comply with all of the applicable Development Permit Guidelines;
- ✓ similar rezoning applications in an area are processed together and presented to the same Planning Committee, Council Meeting and Public Hearing; and
- ✓ the internal tracking system (Amanda) and method of referring applications to outside agencies has been streamlined.

This has resulted in a reduction in the average processing time of rezoning, Development Permit and subdivision applications. A Baseline Study is currently underway to quantify this more accurately.

### Staff Resources

The Development Applications Department was recently able to temporarily fill the Planning Technician – Design position that had been vacant for a number of years by using the additional revenue from the significant increase in development application activity. One of the primary functions of this position is to expedite simple land development projects (rezoning applications; Development Permits; General Compliance rulings; and Development Variance Permits).

## Analysis

### Development and Building Community Consultation

The development and building community have indicated that they are very supportive of any type of fast tracking system the City may introduce.

Staff have discussed the notion of fast tracking development applications with the UDI Liaison Committee on a couple of occasions.

The UDI representatives have identified the following three suggestions, the status of which is noted below:

1. **Additional Staff Resources**                      There is some capacity, albeit limited, to utilize staff overtime to provide a fast track service. Staff are also reviewing the possibility of having a pool of outside personnel on call during busy times, vacations, sicknesses, etc..
2. **Meeting With Key Players**                      Staff have already implemented this suggestion to arrange a meeting between staff and the applicant's design team when a new Development Permit application is made (although this suggestion is being affected by the staff time involved in Project "Why Not?").
3. **Pre-Zone Areas**                                      The City's Land Investment Sub-Team of the Economic Development Strategic Team is examining the pros and cons of this Pre-zoning suggestion and will be reporting to Committee/Council in the near future.

UDI staff have reviewed this report and referred it to some of their members. They are in support of the direction being taken on the understanding that it provides more certainty to the process (e.g. other Departments can not add comments/requirements later in the process) and that adequate staff resources are available during vacations, illnesses, etc.

The concept of fast tracking simple rezoning applications was also raised at the workshop which the Development Applications Department hosted with the GVHBA on September 9, 2003 and supported by those present. This report was referred to the GVHBA for comment and their staff are in support of the proposed new application fee/process.

### Fast Tracking Proposal

It is proposed that on initial staff review, simple rezoning and Development Permit applications, applicants be given the option of entering a "fast track", for an additional fee.

More complex applications which cannot be fast tracked because they require more detailed negotiations would continue to be given the option of an agreed processing schedule.

The decision of whether or not to pay this fee would be at the option of the applicants, and would mean that they would have to erect the required signage and provide any required information by a specified date (if not, staff would not be able to fast track their development application).

A potential saving of 2 to 3 months is possible and a guaranteed Planning Committee date would be provided.

The criteria staff would use to determine if a rezoning application could be fast tracked would include:

- compliance with the Official Community Plan (OCP) and/or Area Plan;
- compliance with an existing Single-Family Lot Size Policy;
- consistency with the Arterial Road Redevelopment and Lane Establishment Policies;
- does not involve off-site works and services beyond the site (e.g. a Servicing Agreement); and
- assessment of staff resources and work loads.

Development Permit applications could be fast tracked if the following conditions applied:

- the development involves four (4) or less dwelling units or a small building area;
- all of the applicable Development Permit Guidelines are complied with;
- the review of the Advisory Design Panel is not required because of the scale of the development; and
- assessment of staff resources and work loads.

Staff are currently working on an abbreviated/simplified Staff Report to the Planning Committee for rezoning applications that are being fast tracked. A similar shorter report will also be prepared for Development Permits that are fast tracked.

In order to implement the fast track proposal, it is recommended that the existing Bylaw establishing development application fees be amended effective January 1, 2004 to include an additional **\$1,000.** fee where City staff determine that a rezoning application or Development Permit application can be fast tracked.

**Financial Impact**

The additional revenue raised from fast tracking rezoning applications and Development Permits would be used to fund overtime or additional staff resources. In other words, this new fee would not generate surplus funds (revenues and expenditures would be balanced) but would provide the option of an additional level of service for customers.

**Conclusion**

This report has outlined existing measures that have already been taken to expedite the processing of development applications and proposes an option to "fast track" suitable rezoning and Development Permit applications. The concept of fast tracking simple land development projects has been discussed with the UDI and GVHBA, and their staff are in agreement with the recommendation to include a new \$1,000. fee for fast tracking zoning amendments and Development Permits in the Development Application Fees Bylaw effective January 1, 2004.



Holger Burke, MCIP  
Development Coordinator  
(4164)

HB:blg



**Development Application Fees Bylaw No. 7276,  
Amendment Bylaw No. 7622**

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

1. "Development Application Fees Bylaw No. 7276" is amended as follows:
  - a) Section 1.2, **Zoning Amendments**, to include the following new clause:
 

"1.2.5 Where **City** staff and the **applicant** agree on an expedited timetable for an application to amend the land use designation of property shown in the **Zoning and Development Bylaw**, the **applicant** must pay an additional application fee of \$1,000 to take advantage of the agreed to expedited timetable."
  - b) Section 1.4, **Development Permits**, to include the following new clause:
 

"1.4.4 Where **City** staff and the **applicant** agree on an expedited timetable for an application for a **Development Permit**, the **applicant** must pay an additional application fee of \$1,000 to take advantage of the agreed to expedited timetable."
2. This Bylaw is cited as "**Development Application Fees Bylaw No. 7276, Amendment Bylaw No. 7622**", and comes into force and effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.

FIRST READING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK