

**TO:** MAYOR & COUNCILLORS  
**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
**SUBJECT:** **SU: DAP PROGRAM - PHASE 3 INTERIM REPORT**  
**PURPOSE:** To provide an interim status update (SU) on the activities and outcomes of the Development Approvals Process (DAP) program.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the report titled "SU: DAP Program - Phase 3 Interim Report" dated June 10, 2025, be received for information.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Development Approvals Process (DAP) Program is a continuous improvement initiative within the City, focusing on enhancing customer experience, increasing transparency, and improving efficiency. The program consists of four stages, with the first two complete and the third underway. This report provides an interim update on the activities of the third stage, DAP 03, the outcomes achieved to date, and the work priorities to the end of 2025.

## **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

The DAP Program is consistent with the following policies and plans:

- Corporate Strategic Plan (2022),
- Regional Context Statement (2013),
- Official Community Plan (1998), and
- Economic Development Strategy (2007).

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

In 2021, the City launched the Development Approvals Process (DAP) Project to review and update its existing application processing practices, aiming to reduce timelines for development and building permits. The DAP Project, now transitioned to the DAP Program, aims to build a development approvals process known for excellence, founded on a solutions-oriented partnership of accountability.

The DAP Program consists of four stages, with goals of streamlining the development application process, reducing processing time, and enhancing customer service. DAP 01 identified 18 recommendations to optimize organization and resources, drive consistency and performance, and improve predictability and transparency. DAP 02 included early implementation of the 18 recommendations, focusing on the "Big 5" development processes: Rezoning (REZ), Subdivision (SUB), Preliminary Plan Approval (PPA), and Building Permits for Residential and Commercial applications. DAP 03, targeted for completion by the end of 2025, continues the improvement and implementation efforts from the previous stage. With activities now led by a dedicated staff team, DAP 03 also marks the transition towards the final stage, Sustainability.

### 3.0 DAP 03: WORK PROGRAM, KEY ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

**3.1 Work Program** The DAP 03 work program is led by a Program Manager and supported by a Business Process Improvement Specialist, Business Data Analyst, Change Management Specialist, and two Project Facilitators. The program is comprised of 16 cross-departmental projects across two workstreams:

1. **Business process improvements** employing a Lean Six Sigma (LSS) approach towards continuous improvement including process mapping, data analytics, change management and reporting; and
2. **Technology improvements** include EnerGov upgrades and other software and technology enhancements to enhance development approval.

The work program is supported, in part, by a \$150,000 grant from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Local Government Development Approvals Program for certain qualifying activities, and by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF).

#### 3.2 Key Activities and Outcomes

Key activities and outcomes to date include:

1. **Continued improvements to the Residential Building Permit process for Small Scale Multi Unit Housing (SSMUH),** including single and two-family dwellings. Recent initiatives include: the introduction of refined data analysis and reporting to monitor permit processing times; automated notifications for property owners; seamless integration of the Forestry division workflow within EnerGov; new building permit processes for SSMUH forms; and simplifying the residential additions and renovations process.

These efforts have improved customer transparency, enabled precise tracking of processing times, and enhanced overall process efficiency, leading to a further 20% reduction of processing time in 2024 compared to 2023 (DAP 02 early implementation). Average review time for new SSMUH applications is currently 21 days from when plan review begins to a permit being issued or a deficiency list being provided for the customer to resolve. For context, a comparator municipality has 10 weeks as an established target.

2. **Full operationalization of the Certified Professional (CP) Program,** which expedites Commercial Building Permit applications, while maintaining the required level of rigor and building code compliance. Since inception (September 2023), the City has received and has been fast-tracking 34 CP building projects, representing \$4.1B in permit fees. To date, 12 permits have been issued. With a high level of customer satisfaction arising from the City's responsiveness (e.g. same-day responses for the fastest 10% of projects), the City has developed an enviable reputation, evidenced by requests from other municipalities seeking the City's input to implement their own CP programs.

3. **Completely overhauling the end-to-end process for complex applications** (“Complex E2E process”). Work is well underway to significantly streamline and integrate the Rezoning, Subdivision, future Development Permit (DP), and Commercial Building Permit processes. Activities completed to date in support of this include: procedural changes to bylaw, public hearing and area notification requirements allowing for greater efficiency in the rezoning stream, resulting in a savings of more than 32 working months for applicants. A new Pre-Application stage that facilitates early and comprehensive engagement between applicants and City staff, shortening processing and approval times by clarifying requirements for rezoning, subdivision, and other development applications, and ensuring compliance before full review is under development with an initial inquiry step launched as a precursor to the full deployment.
4. **Streamlining and standardizing business processes** to meet emerging business needs. Work to date has enhanced efficiency and compliance and includes: integrating district energy requirements into rezoning and building permit processes to capture more developments requiring district energy connections; and implementing a new, transparent application process for the City's liquor and cannabis licensing policies in alignment with Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) guidelines.
5. **Leveraging technology improvements to enhance business value, improve internal and external user experience, and improve customer service.** The DAP team has been working closely with the IT Department on EnerGov upgrades and other software and technology enhancements, including: the rollout of Decision Engine (DE) integrated with My Permit Portal (MPP) to guide applicants in selecting the appropriate permit application type(s); the launch of the Explore and eCheck digital building permit review tools to provide specific zoning requirements for properties and automate review of building plans for zoning compliance; and a comprehensive review and update of the digital intake process through MPP to enable future intake for other permit applications.
6. **Transitioning the PPA process into a new Development Permit system.** Work is well underway to establish Form and Character, Streamside Protection, and Tenant Protections DPs, including policy development to establish regulatory frameworks, business process mapping, technical specifications, and documentation to operationalize the permits.
7. **Developing a data management and analytics framework** to enhance data analytics, reporting, and visualization; support performance measures; and increase visibility into processing times and application status. Activities completed to date include developing a refreshed Building Tabulation Report for greater transparency into city construction activity data and a public dashboard to track Burnaby's progress on new home construction targets as established by the CMHC HAF Program.

Project priorities in the second half of the DAP 03 work program to the end of 2025 include:

- further improving the online portal application intake process for residential building permits;
- expanding digital intake options for CP and commercial building permits;
- enhancing the processing and approval procedures for commercial tenant improvement permits;
- implementing the DP Transition for all three new development permit types.
- introducing online functionality for booking residential inspections;
- preparing for electronic reviews (E-Reviews) of architectural drawings for development approvals, starting with residential building permits; and
- establishing a new construction management permit process to facilitate early construction planning for large projects, supporting Complex E2E.

A comprehensive summary of program outcomes will be provided to Council at the conclusion of the DAP 03 work program.

It is also noted that process improvement and process management frameworks, documentation, and data frameworks that have been developed to date have scalability beyond development approvals and will be piloted on other department initiatives.

#### **4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Communication and consultation efforts will continue to be undertaken with affected applicants, members of the development industry, and key industry partners—including UDI and HAVAN—as required. In parallel, the City’s website is regularly updated to reflect new information and developments arising from program activities such as new processes and requirements.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As noted above, DAP 03 is supported, in part, by a \$150,000 grant from UBCM’s Local Government Development Approvals Program. The first tranche of the grant was received in June 2024, with the balance to be advanced upon staff submission of a final report to UBCM by June 29, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

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#### **REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

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