

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: **GA - APPLICATION TO UBCM LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS PROGRAM GRANT FUNDING (2026)**
PURPOSE: To seek Council endorsement to apply for the 2026 UBCM Local Government Development Approvals funding program.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT staff be authorized to submit a grant application to the UBCM Local Government Development Approvals Program, for up to \$200,000 in grant funding;

THAT the proposed program activities, as described in Section 3.0 of the report titled “GA – Application to UBCM Local Government Development Approvals Program Grant Funding (2026)” dated March 10, 2026, be supported; and,

THAT staff undertake overall grant management, as required by the UBCM Local Government Development Approvals program.

1.0 POLICY

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

- Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan (2025)
- Corporate Strategic Plan (2022);
- Regional Context Statement (2025); and,
- Economic Development Strategy (2007).

2.0 BACKGROUND

In 2019, the Province of British Columbia initiated the Development Approvals Process Review (DAPR) to identify opportunities to improve the timeliness, and effectiveness of local government development approvals. This led to the creation of the Local Government Development Approvals Program (LGDAP) in 2021, supported by an initial \$15 million in grant funding to help local governments implement best practices and test innovative approaches to development approvals. The Ministry of Housing added \$10 million to the program in 2024, with up to \$150,000 available per applicant with the UBCM administering the program. Approximately \$9.0 million is available for the 2026 intake, with maximum grants of \$200,000 per applicant. All local governments in BC are eligible to apply for the grant. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by an Evaluation Committee. To qualify for funding, applications must be a new or subsequent

phase of a project, and capable of completion by the applicant within one year of the date of grant approval.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The City has advanced multi-phase improvements to its Development Approvals Process (DAP) Program. The objectives of which are:

- i. **Customer Experience.** Provide a customer-focused development approvals system that better serves applicants and the community.
- ii. **Transparency.** Simplify the process thereby making it clearer and more transparent, and ultimately more predictable.
- iii. **Efficiency.** Increase efficiencies thereby reducing approval times and reducing the cost of development.

Phase 1 to 3 of the DAP program which took place from 2021 to 2025 leveraged LGDAP and UBCM funding. These earlier phases focused on foundational process mapping, workflow redesign, and implementation of priority recommendations. These efforts have resulted in improved internal coordination, clearer applicant pathways, and significant incremental reductions in approval timelines particularly for Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH). The DAP Program has now shifted into Phase 4 where development approvals process improvements are part of core business operations. The 2026 LGDAP intake expands eligible activities to include initiatives that support standardized housing designs and modern methods of construction, including modular, prefabricated, and offsite construction. These focus areas directly align with the City’s ongoing work to support expedited housing delivery.

The proposed 2026 LGDAP application represents an acceleration of the next phase of the City’s DAP work. It is designed to continue process improvements, strengthen staff capacity and readiness, and process clarity to support:

- process optimization for electrical service connection for SSMUH developments;
- the use of standardized housing designs for SSMUH forms;
- improved permitting and approval pathways for projects utilizing Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), including modular and prefabricated construction; and,
- a fast-track permitting framework for eligible low-complexity residential projects.

The proposed activities extend and support the City’s housing acceleration work and are structured to meet LGDAP eligibility requirements, which emphasize process improvements, guidance development, bylaw and workflow reviews, staff training, and collaboration with external partners. In review of eligible activities, ongoing DAP priorities, and the available grant amount, staff have identified the following key initiatives to submit for funding:

- **Development Approvals Process Review and Refinement:** reviewing and refining development approval processes to better support standardized design applications by updating internal workflows, improving intake and triage to distinguish between simple and complex proposals, and identifying opportunities to delegate routine or technical approvals where appropriate. Streamlining the electrical service connection process in collaboration with BC Hydro to make connecting to electricity faster, easier, and more customer-focused for all developments, but with a focus on SSMUH.
- **Standardized Design Enablement (Process and Guidance):** supporting the expansion and use of a robust library of standardized housing designs for conventional and modular construction by reviewing zoning and permitting requirements and developing clear internal checklists, staff guidance, and applicant-facing materials to clarify submission and review expectations. Accelerating the uptake through the City's Design Library using targeted communications, simplified guidance, and digital enablement via a new software pilot.
- **Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Readiness:** advancing readiness for MMC by reviewing relevant bylaws, guidelines, and approval workflows, and by developing clear MMC-specific guidance for staff and applicants to minimize uncertainty and case-by-case interpretation.
- **Staff Training and Change Management:** supporting effective implementation of updated processes by delivering cross-departmental training and strengthening internal capacity to assess standardized and MMC-based applications in a consistent, efficient, and predictable manner.
- **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement:** engaging internal departments and external partners, including BC Hydro, and the development and modular construction sectors, to validate proposed process improvements and guidance, and on delivering targeted information sessions or workshops to support adoption of the new processes.

These activities are explicitly eligible under the LGDAP Program Guide, which permits funding for process improvements, guidance development, bylaw and workflow reviews, training, and collaboration related to standardized designs and modern methods of construction

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The LGDAP grant provides up to 100% of the cost of eligible activities up to a maximum of \$200,000 per applicant. It is recommended that the City apply for the maximum amount of funding and, if successful, secure the consultant(s) necessary to assist staff with this work immediately.

A Council resolution is required, indicating the City's support for the proposed activities and willingness to provide overall grant management.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Leah Libsekal, Program Manager Development Applications, and reviewed by Karin Hung, Director Strategic Initiatives and Johannes Schumann, Senior Director Development Services.