

# Planning & Development Process Improvements – 2025

Presented to the Internal Audit Steering Committee

March 2026



## **KPMG BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT – PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The purpose of the report is to update the Internal Audit Steering Committee (IASC) on the status of the implementation of approved actions to address the recommendations contained in the KPMG Business Process Improvement Report – Planning and Development.

### ***About the KPMG Business Process Improvement Project:***

Council put forward \$150,000 in the 2023 budget for the purpose of business process improvement in the Engineering Department and Planning & Development Department.

In November 2023, the City of St. Albert engaged KPMG (an audit, tax, and advisory firm) to conduct process reviews of two areas:

1. Planning and Development process improvement, with the objective to increase awareness of complete planning and development processes, including opportunities and challenges, business requirements for land management and permitting software, and a market scan of the systems that would meet the City's needs and identify process improvement opportunities.
2. Capital Project Management Office process review, with the objective to help the City standardize and formalize practices and processes across Capital Project Management and Procurement, and clearly define roles and responsibilities in general, and between sponsors and delivery departments.

The project included current state development via document review, stakeholder engagement (internal & external), creation of current state customer journey and high-level process maps, and jurisdictional scans. The current state development was utilized to identify a possible future state, conduct a gap analysis between the current and future state, identify high-level future state customer journey and process maps, and provide a market scan of technology opportunities. Emphasis in the process reviews was placed on creating efficiency, clarity, accountability, consistency, expediency, predictability, and positive service experience.

The final reports were presented to Administration in August 2024. The KPMG review was completed purely from a process improvement lens towards a maturity path based on industry bench marking, rather than through an auditor lens for non-compliance to any standards.

**Project Accomplishments – 2025**

2025 was a year of significant change within the Planning and Development Department. In late 2024, City Council approved a new Land Use Bylaw, and the City was awarded Housing Accelerator Funding (HAF) through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). As a result, implementation efforts in 2025 focused on advancing HAF priorities, improving processes related to the new Land Use Bylaw (LUB), and aligning recommendations from the KPMG report. Key areas of focus included enhancements to the e-permitting platform, development of process documentation, improved internal and external communication, and continued progress on process digitization. Projects of note include:

- Launch of the new digital version of the LUB,
- Updates to all digital application forms for improved communication and incorporation of plain language,
- Procured an e-permitting software program,
- Soft launched 10 e-permits, achieving the contractual required goal of HAF’s Electronic Building Permit Processing Program initiatives,
- Documentation of processes and steps regarding permit types,
- Staff participation in the Province of Alberta’s MGA/Safety Codes Permitting Process Automatic Yes project, and
- Staff undertook LEAN Six Sigma training (late 2024).

**Recommendations by Status**

COMPLETED 	IN PROGRESS 	NOT STARTED 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application Completeness</li> <li>• Communication and Education (Internal)</li> <li>• Communication and Education (External)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process Documentation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue Escalation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Risk Based Approach</li> <li>• Process Digitization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Analyst Support</li> <li>• Performance Management Framework</li> </ul>

Recommendations	Report Risk Rating	Approved Action Plan	Timing	Implementation Status	Completion Date
 Application Completeness	Medium – High	Reduce the number of low-quality or incomplete applications accepted at intake.	6-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Updated checklists to inform applicants and staff as to what is considered a complete application.</li> <li>✓ Updated forms and websites to include proactive communication to support completeness               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promote pre-application consultations</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Provided insight to the Province regarding application completeness</li> </ul>	Completed 2025
 Process Documentation	High-Medium	Create process maps and flow charts for all applications	6-36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Started the documentation of comprehensive process mapping for all application processes through the implementation of e-permitting – completed the first 10 permit type under the HAF project.</li> <li>✓ Undertaking LEAN staff training.</li> <li>✓ Explore the potential for permit bundling or concurrent team reviews.</li> <li>- Improve customer service experience to provide notification of application status, which will be fully implemented as part of the E-Permitting program</li> </ul>	2028

Recommendations	Report Risk Rating	Approved Action Plan	Timing	Implementation Status	Completion Date
 Business Analysis Support	Medium - High	Assign dedicated business analysis support to steward continuous improvement initiatives	24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake a feasibility review of additional resources required to support this recommendation.</li> <li>- Develop Operating Business Case – subject to the findings of this review.</li> </ul>	2027
 Performance Management Framework	Medium - High	Establish a framework that defines service level performance metrics and reporting internals for all P&D services	24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop operating business case to support this initiative.</li> <li>- Undertake review of existing metrics and internal reporting</li> <li>- Identify any gaps, and what resources are required to address the gaps</li> <li>- Scope the framework to provide best information in an efficient manner</li> </ul>	2027

Recommendations	Report Risk Rating	Approved Action Plan	Timing	Implementation Status	Completion Date
 Issue Escalation	Medium Low	Formalize the process by which applicants may escalate issues to senior leadership/Council	12-24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Evaluate the existing mechanisms within the organization.</li> <li>- Undertake a jurisdictional scan to determine best practices</li> <li>- Develop process which responds to the needs of Council, Administration and the Public.</li> </ul>	2027
 Risk Based Approach	Medium	Develop automated or expedited approval processes for select application types	12-24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provided insight to Provincial review regarding “automatic yes”</li> <li>- Evaluate which development permits have limited life safety impact</li> <li>- Develop online application through e-permitting</li> </ul>	2028

Recommendations	Report Risk Rating	Approved Action Plan	Timing	Implementation Status	Completion Date
 Communication and Education (Internal)	Medium	Improve internal awareness of P&D mandate and processes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Clarify and communicate the roles, responsibilities, and criteria that departments consider when evaluating applications.</li> <li>✓ Develop a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) resource for other departments to efficiently manage external queries, reducing the need to redirect them to P&amp;D</li> <li>✓ Implement cross-training initiatives to enable resource reallocation during periods of high volume, ensuring a smooth and efficient workflow</li> </ul>	Completed 2025

Recommendations	Report Risk Rating	Approved Action Plan	Timing	Implementation Status	Completion Date
 Communication and Education (External)	Medium	Improve customer-focused information using plain language communication materials and a digital customer portal	12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Engage key stakeholders regarding process changes</li> <li>✓ Update forms to include plain language</li> <li>✓ Select and implement a digital e-permitting platform</li> <li>✓ Update P&amp;D website and utilize Cultivate the Conversations to include updated information regarding ongoing projects</li> </ul>	Completed 2025

Recommendations	Report Risk Rating	Approved Action Plan	Timing	Implementation Status	Completion Date
 Process Digitization	High	Leverage technology to transition away from primarily paper-based processes	3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This recommendation is scheduled to be completed in 2028 with the implementation of the e-permitting software.</li> </ul>	2028