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**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**Date:** 7/5/2023 5:08:14 PM  
**Subject:** Bathroom renovation permit requirements - media enquiry

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Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

I am writing in follow up to some media enquiries we received today regarding the City's requirements for renovation permits. The media questions were prompted by a social media post referencing requirements for a bathroom renovation project.

As members of Council have also asked about this matter, I have copied below for your reference the response that we provided to the media outlet. To confirm, the original Twitter post included inaccurate information.

Best,  
Paul

Without an address, we are unable to provide more details on this specific application. We encourage the citizen to reach out to us to discuss so we can help resolve it.

A simple bathroom renovation application can be approved in as little as a week. To help speed up permit issuance for renovations, the City has implemented a direct to inspections route, which fast tracks the approval to go directly to an inspector for onsite review. For complex renovations, which require more steps, a staff coordinator will work with the applicant to review the steps, support all the requirements, and process the application.

For simple renovations:

- An arborist report is not required. Applicants must declare they won't be storing construction materials on any tree or plant roots.
- An energy audit is required for renovations over \$20,000, as part of the City's climate action efforts to reduce emissions from buildings.
- A site survey is not required for interior renovations – the applicant only needs to provide a simple site plan or image.

Over the last few years, the City has been working hard to improve permitting and reduce wait times for applicants. Our most recent efforts include:

- Streamlining engineering review requirements in all development permit (DP) applications, including removing 20 per cent of conditions and moving an additional 25 per cent to risk-based review. Due to the success of this program, City staff are looking to expand the risk-based approach to renovation permits with a goal to further reduce project timelines for applicants.

- Exploring options to simplify and align existing regulations across all low-density (RS) zones by removing 17 design and administrative requirements so housing can be built faster.
- Proposing shifting rainwater management requirements from the DP application process to the plumbing permit for new complex buildings in Vancouver so that applicants begin work on their projects sooner. This is schedule to go to Public Hearing later this month – if approved, it will take effect January 1, 2024.

Additional highlights include:

- Plans for houses, duplexes, laneways and townhouses can now be checked in as little as two and half weeks, saving over nine weeks.
- Updated inspection review processes significantly reduce the need for applicants to address/redo previously unpermitted work, unless it is a life-safety concern.
- The Tenant Improvement Program provides a dedicated building permit review stream for office tenants in eligible commercial buildings, allowing them to receive a permit in as little as two weeks.

#### Digital Permitting Tools

To improve customer service and reduce the reliance on paper-based work and required in-person visits, the City has transitioned to electronic permit applications. This change allows permit applications to be accepted, paid, reviewed, processed and issued electronically. As of December 2022, all permit types can be applied for online.

To reduce staff manual review time and provide residents and businesses with confidence that their application is compliant and complete, this City will be launching two new digital tools:

- Project Requirements Exploration Tool (PRET). PRET will allow applicants to explore and understand regulations and requirements for locations throughout Vancouver. Applicants can identify potential costs, map out timelines, and determine project feasibility – all before they pursue a potential application. PRET is slated to launch later this summer.
- eComply, an online design compliance check tool developed by Archistar using City of Vancouver regulations, will allow applicants for certain types of projects, to upload their designs and drawings, check if they meet City regulations, and receive a compliance report – all before submitting their application. eComply is slated to launch early next year.

For a complete list of improvements to permitting, please visit our [permitting improvements page](#).

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Snw̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.