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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 10/10/2023 12:38:07 PM

Subject: Upcoming news release: Permitting updates (October 11, 2023)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below news release on October 11 regarding our latest permitting improvements. Please keep this embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account at 10 AM.

This news release complements the memo you received last week detailing our latest efforts to improve permitting. Highlights include:

- Laneway house applicants can now use the City's Project Requirements Exploration Tool (PRET), a digital tool to explore what is permitted on their site and understand all requirements to receive a permit
- Residential Renovation Fast (RRFT) permit stream issues permits in as little as a week for simple renovation projects less than \$95,000
- The removal of an additional 78 engineering conditions further simplifies the application process and reduces staff's initial review time to eight weeks (previously 12).
- The elimination of nearly 30 per cent of zoning and development bylaw requirements results in significantly fewer documents for staff to review in the application process.

Angela will reply to this email with the relevant Vancouver.ca link and social media links, once these are live.

In the meantime, please find attached some social media content that you may use in resharing the City's posts or on your own social media channels over the coming weeks.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

City of Vancouver
News release
October 11, 2023

Permitting improvements ease laneway builds and residential renovations

Building a laneway house in Vancouver just became easier with the introduction of the interactive digital [Project Requirements Exploration Tool \(PRET\)](#), which allows applicants to research and

understand all regulations and requirements associated with their site.

Launched last month, as part of the City's efforts to [improve the permitting process](#), the first iteration of PRET's digital features helps applicants in residential, single-family zones explore if a laneway house is allowed on the property, identify required permits and determine if construction of their laneway is feasible, all before they submit an application. PRET helps applicants ensure their projects are consistent with zoning requirements, which will significantly reduce the time required to process and issue those permits.

"We're proud to unveil a digital permitting tool to simplify, speed up and modernize permitting," said Mayor Ken Sim. "By launching PRET for laneway homes we are taking an important step, bringing us closer to the 3-3-3-1 goals for permitting approval timelines and meeting the [provincial housing targets](#), underscoring our all-hands-on-deck approach to getting homes built faster."

[Watch how PRET supports laneway home applications.](#)

As part of the launch process, the City invited frequent laneway house applicants to evaluate the interactive technology and provide feedback. Participants commended how the tool's eligibility check and tailored list of required documents supported them in submitting complete permit applications.

"We are grateful to industry members who took part in testing the Project Requirements Exploration Tool (PRET)," said Andrea Law, General Manager, Development, Buildings and Licensing. "The City will continue to work with residents and businesses as we evolve PRET to include more project types in more zones in Vancouver."

Residential Renovation Fast Track

To support homeowners, the [Residential Renovation Fast Track](#) stream issues permits within a week for simple residential renovation projects under \$95,000. Projects eligible for these Fast Track permits include simple kitchen or bathrooms alterations; solar panels; plumbing or electrical updates; restoration work; and some accessibility upgrades. These expedited permits now account for 20 per cent of all renovation applications.

"Renovations are some of the most complex permits the City processes with great variability in scope and complexity," said Corrie Okell, Director, Permitting Services. "Processing times for these types of residential renovations are the fastest we have seen in five years, and with more applicants using this simple process, we are optimistic this positive trend will continue."

Ongoing work to improve permitting

To help streamline and simplify development permit applications, the City has implemented the following additional changes over the last few months:

- Simplified the regulations for low-density housing, including the elimination of many design requirements and consolidating nine separate zones into one new Residential Inclusive (R1-1) zone.
- Eliminated more than 150 engineering conditions previously required for many complex development projects and expanded the use of risk-based reviews for remaining conditions, which reduces staff review times by one-third.

Next steps

The City continues to implement changes to streamline permitting. Upcoming improvements in the near term include:

- Expanding PRET to include more project types and areas in Vancouver.
- Expanding the fast-track renovation permits to include commercial renovations.
- Further simplifying land use policies and guidelines, and recommending Council revoke several existing land use policies.
- Eliminating a significant number of additional development permit conditions.
- Expanding the auto-issuance of some sprinkler permits online.

In addition to this work, the City is advocating to the Province for statutory changes to simplify procedural requirements for rezoning so more projects may proceed without the need for rezoning.




More Information

View the complete list of the City's actions to help [improve the permitting process](#).

Media contact:
 Civic Engagement and Communications
media@vancouver.ca

Sample planned social media content:

X (formerly known as Twitter)

Subject	Content	Image
News Release	News Release: Permitting improvements ease laneway builds and residential renovations. #PermittingImprovements #Vancouver Link: News Release	
PRET	PRET, our new Project Requirements Exploration Tool, is now available for laneway homes in R1-1 zones across Vancouver! Watch our video to learn more https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=naae6zSUFzw&feature=youtu.be	
	Building a laneway house in #Vancouver? Our new digital tool, PRET, can you help you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> explore if a laneway house is allowed on your property <input type="checkbox"/> learn what permits are required <input type="checkbox"/> determine if construction is feasible Use PRET. https://cov.service-now.com/csp?id=cov_csp_build_a_laneway_house	
RRFT	To support homeowners with their renovations, our Residential Renovation Fast Track (RRFT) issues permits within a week for simple residential renovation projects under \$95,000. Learn if your project is eligible. LINK: vancouver.ca/home-property-	

development/renovate-home



Permitting
Improvements

Permitting Update! We've implemented some changes to help improve the permit process:

- Simplified engineering conditions
- Removed nearly 30% of zoning & development requirements
- Consolidated 9 zones into 1 Residential Inclusive (R1-1) zone.

LINK: vancouver.ca/permitting-improvements



Draft Social Media Posts for Consideration:

Note: We invite Mayor and Council to reshare the City's posts. Below are supporting copy.

Topic	Draft Copy
General	<p>Vancouver's commitment to its 3-3-3-1 goal is stronger than ever! Thanks to PRET, new streamlined #permitting and Residential Renovation Fast-Track – get your projects completed faster.</p> <p>#BuildingVancouver #PermittingImprovements</p>
General	<p>#Permitting in Vancouver is undergoing a transformation powered by PRET, Residential #Renovation Fast Track, and new streamlined processes. Faster permits, simplified regulations – it's a win-win for the city's future and its residents.</p> <p>#BuildingVancouver #PermittingImprovements</p>
PRET	<p>Faster, simpler permitting is here with PRET. Launched for laneway houses recently, PRET will help you navigate the permitting process effortlessly. Find out if you can build, check permits, feasibility, and more, all before you apply.</p> <p>#BuildingVancouver #PermittingImprovements</p>
PRET	<p>Vancouver is taking an important step towards this Council's 3-3-3-1 goal with PRET. Research, check, and plan your laneway house effortlessly. Proud to bring efficiency and simplicity to our city's development.</p> <p>#BuildingPermits #PermittingImprovements</p>
Residential Renovation Fast Track	<p>We're working towards achieving our 3-3-3-1 objective by streamlining permits. Get a permit in under 1 week for eligible simple projects with Residential Renovation Fast Track (RRFT).</p> <p>#BuildingPermits #PermittingImprovements</p>
Residential Renovation Fast Track	<p>Home #renovations just got a turbo boost! With the Residential Renovation Fast Track, #permits for simple projects can be issued within 1 week. This means getting plumbing updates, electrical improvements, and solar panels done faster.</p> <p>#BuildingVancouver #PermittingImprovements</p>
Streamlined process	<p>We're cutting the red tape and speeding up the permit process! In recent months, we've removed engineering conditions, introduced risk-based reviews, and simplified regulations. Less bureaucracy, more efficiency.</p> <p>#BuildingPermits #PermittingImprovements</p>
Streamlined process	<p>#Progress in action! We've made big changes to Vancouver's #permitting process, making it simpler, more efficient, and in line with our 3-3-3-1 goal. We've eliminated 150 engineering conditions and expanded the use of risk-based reviews.</p> <p>#BuildingPermits #PermittingImprovements</p>

PRET Key Messages:

- The City launched the first iteration of the digital Project Requirements Exploration Tool (PRET) last month, as part of its efforts to streamline the permitting process and provide businesses and residents with confidence their application is complete and accurate.
- Anyone looking to build a laneway house in single family residential zones in Vancouver can use PRET to research and understand all the regulations and requirements associated with their site.
- The interactive technology helps applicants identify potential costs, map out timelines, and determine if construction of their laneway is feasible, all before they hit submit on their application and brings us closer to achieving Council's goal of 3-3-3-1
- The City will continue to evolve the technology available in PRET so all housing and building types are available.

Residential Renovation Fast Track Key Messages:

- To support homeowners, the Residential Renovation Fast Track stream issues permits within a week for simple residential renovation projects under \$95,000.
- Eligible projects include simple kitchen or bathrooms alterations; solar panels; plumbing or electrical updates; restoration work; and some accessibility upgrades.

Permitting Improvement Key Messages

- The City of Vancouver is committed to improving permitting wait times so much-needed housing can be built and help our communities grow.
- To help streamline development permit applications, the City has made the following changes over the last few months:
 - Simplified the regulations for low-density housing, including the elimination of many design requirements and consolidating nine separate zones into one new Residential Inclusive (R1-1) zone.
 - Eliminated more than 150 engineering conditions previously required for many complex development projects and expanded the use of risk-based reviews for remaining conditions, which reduces staff review times by one-third.