

CURRENT
PLANNING
B R A N C H

CURRENT PLANNING BRANCH

**QUARTERLY
PROGRESS
REPORT**

FIRST QUARTER 2015

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BRANCH
PURPOSE

The Current Planning Branch meets the challenge of translating the City's growth vision into plans and development approvals. The Branch shapes a livable, safe, and sustainable City by guiding how land is developed, buildings are constructed, and businesses operate.

GREAT PEOPLE - GREAT SERVICE - GREAT OUTCOMES



NAIL DOWN YOUR PERMIT

The summer residential building season between the months of May to September in Edmonton has historically been busy for both residents and our Current Planning Service Centre. On March 23, we launched the “Nail Down Your Permit” campaign to encourage residents to get a head start on permit applications for their summer construction projects.

This spring, we attended both the Home Renovation Show and the Home and Garden show which was a great platform for our staff to interact with residents and answer any questions they had. We also encouraged residents to share their summer construction projects with the City of Edmonton through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for a chance to win a gift card to local hardware stores and start a conversation about the campaign.

As a result, we saw a 22% increase in submitted Minor Residential Development Combo Permits in March of this year compared to the previous year. We also saw a 28% increase in submitted Minor Development Permits (except Semi-Detached Houses) compared to March 2014.



NAIL DOWN YOUR PERMIT

Get a jump start on your summer residential construction project.
Visit naildownyourpermit.com and get started today!

HOW WE'RE IMPROVING

1

CURRENT PLANNING SERVICE CENTRE

The Current Planning Service Centre ensures that licences and permits move efficiently through each state of the City's process. From the initial application, approval, payment, and records management, they are committed to providing seamless, trustworthy, attentive, and resourceful service.

Q1 2015 Update:

- 14,598 in-person visits, a 5% decrease over Q1 2014.
- 36,630 calls handled, up 71% over Q1 2014.
- Service level of 90% in Q1 2015, meaning 90% of customers waited 15 minutes or less before being helped.

2

PERMIT PROCESS REVIEW

As an initiative of eServices, the Branch is working alongside Tantus Solutions Group Inc. to engage in a review of building and development permits procedures to find areas of improvement. Through this review, Tantus will provide recommendations on how to develop a course of action in order to adapt to changing environment. The summary of recommendations will focus on improving the building and development permitting process with respect to all stakeholders.

Q1 2015 Update:

- Tantus has completed focus groups with key stakeholder external groups and internal staff.
- Recommendations will be reviewed and implementation on improvements will start in Q2 2015.

3

WINTERCITY STRATEGY

The creation of Winter Design Guidelines is a foundational action in the "WinterCity Implementation Plan," approved by Council on September 10, 2013. Current Planning is leading a Winter Design Working group, made up of diverse key stakeholders, to develop the winter design guidelines. They will help Edmonton to become more functional, safe, comfortable, and aesthetic in the winter months. The document is organized into two main components:

- The Streetscape: Improving the public realm provides practical and tactical urban design guidelines for outdoor spaces impacted by the built environment.
- Open Space: Consider winter infrastructure and site design guidelines to enhance our experiences in the outdoors in the winter time.

Q1 2015 Update:

- The Winter Cities Shake-Up was held on January 28-30, 2015 at the Shaw Conference Centre. The event was an international conference where Edmontonians and people from northern cities around the world discussed how we plan, design, live, work in winter cities such as Edmonton. The goal was to shake-up the preconceptions people have about winter cities.

For more information, please visit:

www.wintercitiesconference.com



PLANNING ACADEMY

Planning Academy courses are designed for citizens to better understand and participate in the planning process. Planning Academy also allows citizens the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the roles, rights, and interests of the parties involved in the planning and development process. The program consists of three core courses and four elective courses. A Certificate of Participation can be earned by completing all three core courses along with any one elective. These courses will be offered by City staff at least twice per year. Participants are welcome to take any course whether or not it will lead to the certificate.

Q1 2015 Update:

- There are still spaces available for the Transportation, Urban Design and Infill courses. Register now to reserve your spot.

For more information, please visit
edmonton.ca/planningacademy



SMALL BUSINESS FOCUS GROUPS

The Decision Guide is a tool being developed for the City's eServices initiative. The Decision Guide aims to assist business owners in navigating through the Business Licensing process and ensuring that they have all necessary information to apply for a licence. In January, we partnered with Bannister Research & Consulting to conduct focus groups around this initiative. There were three focus groups conducted, two with small business owners and one with City employees. Through the recommendations given from Bannister, we have gained valuable insight from future users of the Decision Guide, helping to ensure the tool is most useful for our clients.



eSERVICES

eServices is a project that aims to deliver a series of improvements to every day work processes. The purpose of the project is to make the best use of staff time and resources and make it easier for Industry and citizens to do business with the City. Major components of the project include the introduction of electronic forms, electronic plans submission and review, and a knowledge management portal.

Q1 2015 Update:

- 9,193 Pet Licences issued in Q1 2015.
- 546 Business Licence renewals in Q1 2015.



7 NEW GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING SECURITY IN SERVICING AGREEMENTS

The Guidelines for Establishing Security in Servicing Agreements are established by Development Coordination. Developers are first categorized based on their performance, then a percentage of the estimated construction costs, as submitted by the developers' consultant, is used as the Security amount based on the category in which the developer is placed. Any holdback amounts are also determined based on category, as well as timing for submitting fees and assessments.

Notable changes include:

- The reduction of the landscaping holdback to 10% for Category A Developers to a minimum amount of \$20,000.00 (the previous landscaping holdback was 100%).
- Letters of Credit will now require automatic renewal (although highly preferred, automatic renewal was not a hard requirement in the past).

For more information, please visit:
edmonton.ca/servicingagreements



8 REVOLVING INDUSTRIAL SERVICING FUND

The Revolving Industrial Servicing Fund (RIS Fund) is a revolving assistance fund designed to provide development incentives to encourage end user developments. A RIS Fund Rebate will be available to Front End Developers that meet the required criteria. At the March 3 City Council meeting, a motion was approved to allow a fund rebate of up to an additional \$6 million for Golden West Business Park. By June 2015, Current Planning will prepare a Bylaw amendment to increase the maximum borrowing capacity from \$20 million to \$26 million for the Revolving Industrial Servicing Fund.

CURRENT PLANNING BRANCH

FIRST QUARTER ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

View the complete **Quarterly Activity Report** at
www.edmonton.ca/cpproficiency

