

RESPONSE TO ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRY

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**Planning & Development Response to
Regular Meeting of Council
2025 March 18**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
C2025-0288**

Administrative Inquiry – The Automatic Yes Toolkit

This is a response to the Administrative Inquiry submitted by Councillor Penner at the 2025 February 25 Regular Meeting of Council: At the end of January, the provincial government released news about “The Automatic Yes Toolkit” which could impact our existing practices, in particular planning and development. What work is City Administration doing to have discussions with both the provincial government and businesses about potential changes? And how are we auditing our processes so we remain compliant with a focus on policy and legislative frameworks vs the politics of approval which could implicate us financially?

Response:

Members of City Administration, along with representatives from the development industry, municipalities, and municipal organizations met on 2025 February 6 for an engagement session with the Government of Alberta focused on ‘Enabling Growth and Housing Affordability’. A significant focus was on permitting timelines and ‘Automatic Yes’. Administration submitted a follow-up letter to the Province on 2025 February 21 that was shared with Council for awareness. The letter raised potential opportunities to streamline development and several considerations that require further discussion. The letter highlighted that any contemplated changes for ‘Automatic Yes’ address liability concerns, building safety standards, quality of development, and discretionary authority and decision-making.

There will be further engagement sessions to discuss potential changes to the existing framework as it relates to planning and development. Administration has been invited to meet with the Government of Alberta on 2025 March 27 for further discussion around automatic approvals.

The City has been proactive with approvals and already releases several permit types instantly. For instance, all contractor trade permits are automatically released. Calgary also has a partial permit program that allows builders to start on foundation and footing work for new homes and all other building forms throughout the city while the rest of the permit is being reviewed. Calgary released 7,100 partial permits in 2025.

Another example of new work in this area is the Infill Fast Track Program 1.0 launched 2025 March 05. This pilot program focuses on accelerating the review and approval process for development permits, building permits and development site servicing for specific missing middle housing typologies.

Of note, the Canadian Home Builders’ Association released its 2024 Municipal Benchmarking Study (Study) on 2025 March 4. It examines how local development processes, approvals, and charges impact housing affordability and housing supply in major housing markets across the country. Calgary continues to be a leading municipality (ranks fifth in overall Canadian ranking) when it comes to overall performance on planning features, approval timelines and government

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charges and fees. Calgary ranks second in approval timelines for municipalities with over one million residents. This Study is an important input into ongoing reviews and improvements of our approvals process.

We are looking forward to examining the opportunities and risks in greater detail at the upcoming engagement session and will keep Council informed as we gain more clarity. The City is committed to working with industry, other orders of government, the community, and the housing sector at large to address the housing crisis in our City. We recognize the importance of this critical work and look forward to continued collaboration with the Government of Alberta to further streamline processes and increase certainty for communities and industry.

Submitted by Debra Hamilton, General Manager, Planning & Development Services and Reid Hendry, Chief Housing Officer