

Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025

Recommendation:

THAT *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025* be given first, second and third reading.

Report Purpose and Summary Statement:

To recommend that Council consider first, second and third reading of the proposed *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025*.

Strategic Alignment:

Liveable Community; Governance & Corporate Excellence;
Diversified, Thriving Economy

Applicable Legislation/ Bylaw/Policy:

Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 5879-1999 establishes the City's current development application procedures. That bylaw would be repealed upon adoption of the draft *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025*.

Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025

BACKGROUND:

The City is committed to continuously improving its processes. Streamlining the development application review process is part of this ongoing work and is a high priority for the Planning and Building Department.

As part of this ongoing effort, Staff have reviewed the *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 5879-1999* and its associated amending bylaws (the current Development Procedures Bylaw). The review identified opportunities to improve its regulations, with the goal of creating clearer, predictable, and transparent processes for staff and those involved in development applications.

Purpose of the Development Procedures Bylaw

In accordance with Section 460 of the *Local Government Act*, municipalities that have adopted an Official Community Plan (OCP) or Zoning Bylaw are required to establish, by bylaw, the procedures by which landowners may apply to amend these documents or apply for development permits.

The current Development Procedures Bylaw (Attachment A), adopted in 2000 and subsequently amended several times, establishes the procedures for the following types of development applications:

- OCP amendments;
- Zoning Bylaw amendments (i.e., rezoning);
- Development Permits;
- Development Variance Permits;
- Temporary Use Permits; and
- Heritage Alteration Permits.

The Bylaw is a key document used by staff and applicants, guiding the application process from pre-application/intake to final adoption/approval. There are also other bylaws that relate to and direct development application processing, including the *Development Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 6478-2007* (Attachment B) and the *Minor Development Variance Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 7952-2023* (Attachment C).

The proposed *Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025* consolidates and updates the above-referenced bylaws into one comprehensive bylaw, to enhance clarity, improve accessibility, and streamline the provision of information necessary for submitting and understanding the City's development application processes. Additionally, integrating these

regulations into a single bylaw ensures consistency and efficiency in application review and decision-making.

DISCUSSION:

Since adoption, the current Development Procedures Bylaw has been amended multiple times. The amendments primarily addressed specific issues, such as legislative changes and the introduction of new processes. However, despite these updates, the bylaw has become increasingly outdated and fragmented, making it less effective and harder to navigate.

To address this, staff recommend repealing the current Development Procedures Bylaw and replacing it with a new, updated and comprehensive bylaw (Attachment D). The proposed *Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025* streamlines the development application process, improves clarity and transparency, ensures consistency, and consolidates related regulations into a single document for easier reference.

Building on the foundation of the current bylaw, the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw incorporates updated content that reflects current practices and legislation. Key updates include:

- **Definitions Section:** Introduces clear definitions to provide clarity and support consistent interpretation of terms used throughout the bylaw.
- **Expanded Scope:** Captures a slightly broader range of application types under the bylaw (e.g., housing agreements).
- **Detailed Application Requirements:** Provides more comprehensive guidance on what applicants must submit to streamline application review make it more consistent.
- **Revised Pre-Application Review Process:** Formerly referred to as “pre-application meetings” or PAM, it now clearly outlines when a pre-application is required, and under what circumstances it may be waived.
- **Development Approval Information:** Specifies the types of information applicants must provide throughout the review process.
- **Delegation of Authority:** Introduces a new section authorizing delegated approval of minor Development Permits and Development Variance Permits to staff.
- **Bylaw Lapse and Time Extensions:** Adds clarity to how expired applications and extensions are managed, and adds a final, one-time Council extension option for applications needing more time to reach final adoption.
- **Public Notification and Consultation:** Establishes procedures for public notifications and consultation and aligns the City process with the recent provincial housing legislation updates.
- **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing:** Considers the Urban Infill Residential (i.e., SMMUH) legislation and streamlines procedures for these housing types.
- **General housekeeping updates:** Includes updated language and formatting to improve clarity, align with other bylaws, and reflect current practices.

Further details on key sections of the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw are provided below.

Pre-Application Review:

As part of continuous improvements, staff have reviewed and clarified the procedures related to “pre-application meetings”. Under the proposed *Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025*, the term “Pre-Application Meeting” is replaced with “Pre-Application Review (PAR)” to provide greater clarity for applicants and staff. The term “meeting” suggests a meeting is required, but this stage mainly involves a preliminary inter-departmental comments before a formal application is made. Meetings may occur, if necessary, but are not mandatory.

Purpose of the Pre-Application Review

The PAR process provides early feedback before a completed development application is submitted. It helps identify conformance with City bylaws and policies, and clarifies technical requirements and supporting information that will be needed to streamline review upon submission of a formal application. A written inter-departmental response is typically provided, and follow-up meetings may occur if needed.

Application Types Requiring a Pre-Application Review

Under the current Development Procedures Bylaw, a PAR is required for the following application types:

- OCP amendment;
- Zoning amendment or rezoning;
- Development Permit;
- Development Variance Permit; and
- Temporary Use Permit.

The new Development Procedures Bylaw maintains these and expands the requirement to also include Heritage Alteration Permits/Heritage Revitalization Agreements.

Potential Exceptions to Pre-Application Review

The current Development Procedures Bylaw allows the Director of Planning and Building to waive the PAR requirement for Minor Development Permits and Development Variance Permits.

The proposed bylaw maintains these possible exemptions, and expands them to include:

- Subdivisions creating up to three new lots, provided the application is not complex (e.g., minimal environmental considerations);
- Temporary Use Permits specifically related to filming activities; and
- Urban Infill Residential applications, which are automatically exempt and do not require a written waiver request.

Delegation of Authority:

The proposed Development Procedures Bylaw introduces a new section on the delegation of authority by Council to the Director of Planning and Building for certain application types. Under the *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*, Council may delegate authority to issue or refuse:

- Minor (i.e., small-scale) Development Permits and amendments;
- Environmental (i.e., Natural Features, Watercourse Protection, and Wildfire Development Permits); and
- Minor Development Variance Permits.

These delegations already exists through the *Minor Development Variance Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 7952-2023* and the *Development Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 6478-2007*. The proposed bylaw consolidates these delegations of authority into one bylaw, repeals the old bylaws, and updates the criteria for what qualifies as “minor” to streamline low-impact applications. Proposed delegated applications include:

1. Environmental-related Development Permits, including Natural Features, Watercourse Protection, and Wildfire Development Permits (no changes);
2. Heritage Alteration Permits (no changes);
3. Minor Development Permits (criteria updated);
4. Minor Development Variance Permits (criteria updated); and
5. Renewal (including refusal of renewal) of Temporary Use Permits (new delegated authority)

More details on the key changes are provided in the following section.

Delegated Authority for Minor Development Permits

Under Development Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 6478-2007, the following is currently delegated to the Director of Planning and Building:

Small-Scale Development Permits: projects with an estimated construction cost under \$500,000;

Minor Amendments to Development Permits: applies to changes that do not affect the basic form and character of the development, adjacent properties, or the streetscape. Modifications should enhance the project without altering key site planning or urban design elements; and

Environmental and Wildfire Development Permits: development permits related to watercourse protection, natural features, and wildfire.

The proposed Development Procedures Bylaw updates terminology from “small-scale development permit” to “minor development permit” and introduces updated criteria for what qualifies as “minor” (previously called “small-scale”), moving away from a cost-based definition.

Minor Development Permits eligible for delegation under the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw will be defined by specific criteria, which are outlined below.

Urban Infill Residential (up to 6 units): Delegating the approval of Development Permits for Urban Infill Residential, up to 6 units, to the Director of Planning and Building. This is essentially a technical exercise by staff ensuring that the City’s zoning and technical requirements are met, and delegation will reduce the need to report to and seek Council approval, streamline application processing, and enhance administrative efficiency.

Specific types of physical changes: The current Development Procedures Bylaw defines “small-scale development permits” by cost, using a \$500,000 threshold. Cost-based definitions are problematic because estimates are hard to confirm, do not always indicate planning impact, and fluctuate over time. Under the proposed approach, a permit would qualify as “Minor” if it involves limited changes such as façade updates, landscaping or parking modifications, or small additions under 250 m² of floor area. Examples may include relocating planters to add EV chargers, or updating exterior building materials with similar quality and appearance.

Signage: New or replacement signs that comply with the *Maple Ridge Sign Bylaw No. 7630-2020* are proposed to be delegated to staff for approval. An example of this would be if a new commercial tenant took over a building and proposed to update the exterior signage to reflect their business name and branding.

Minor Amendments: Minor amendments to existing Council-issued Development Permits that do not significantly alter approved form and character, such as replacing plant species or making small window adjustments, would be delegated to staff.

Reissuance of Council-Issued Expired Permits: Reissuance of expired Development Permits with no changes to Council-approved plans may be delegated to the Director if requested within six months of expiry; only one reissuance would be allowed through the delegation.

Delegated Authority for Minor Development Variance Permits

In 2021, the Province broadened Council’s authority to delegate Minor Development Variance Permits (DVPs) to staff. The City implemented this through *Minor Development Variance Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 7952-2023*, adopted in October 2023. While this delegation already exists, its use has been limited. To improve clarity, encourage its appropriate use and streamline the process, staff propose updating the criteria for Minor DVPs under the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw.

Under the existing Minor Development Variance Permit Delegation Bylaw, the following variances are considered as a Minor DVP:

- **Principal Buildings and Structures Setbacks:** Where the variance(s) does not exceed 10–20%, depending on lot size.
- **Accessory Buildings and Structures Setbacks:** Where the variance(s) does not exceed 15%, except for Renewable Energy Devices (20%).
- **Height:** Where the variance(s) does not exceed 10% above the maximum permitted height.
- **Parking:** Where variance(s) does not exceed a reduction of 10% for off-street parking spaces, excluding:
 - Areas within the payment-in-lieu program
 - Accessible parking
 - Single detached and duplex residential uses; and
 - Accessory dwelling units (e.g., secondary suites, detached garden suites).

The proposed Development Procedures Bylaw establishes eligibility criteria for Minor DVPs that can be delegated to the Director of Planning and Building. A variance may be considered “minor” if it aligns with the OCP, does not involve a change of land use or density, and complies with other regulations.

Additional qualifying criteria include:

- Within 20% of the Zoning Bylaw requirement;
- Pertaining to retaining wall height;
- No Development Permit required (or already delegated);
- The need for the variance results from road dedication for Urban Infill Residential development; or
- It corrects errors in a previously approved Council-issued DVP.

Parking variances may qualify if:

- They are within 20% of the Parking Bylaw requirement for applications with five or more dwelling units. There are no delegation provisions for variances for accessible/visitor spaces, cash-in-lieu areas, single-detached or infill uses, accessory dwelling units, and dimensional requirements

A key proposed change is the adoption of a uniform 20% variance threshold as being considered “minor” across all categories. This simplifies the process, improves administrative efficiency, and aligns with practices in other municipalities.

If a variance is part of a larger application that requires Council approval, such as a rezoning or Development Permit, the entire application, including the variance, would be considered by Council.

Below are examples of scenarios involving a Minor DVP that would be eligible to be delegated to staff with the provisions of the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw:

- Triplex with a front yard setback reduced from 7.5 m to 5.3 m (a 20% reduction).
- Single detached home increasing a retaining wall height from 1.2 m to 2 m.
- Lot width reduced from 27 m to 20 m (where no development permit is required).
- Neighbourhood plaza adds 100 m² for a café and reduces parking from 50 to 40 spaces (a 20% reduction).

Delegation of Temporary Use Permit Renewals

Currently, all Temporary Use Permit applications, including renewals, are presented to Council for consideration. Under the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw, the initial approvals would still remain with Council, but renewals and refusals of renewal would be delegated to staff. This change reduces administrative workload and improves efficiency in managing temporary land uses.

Regular Reporting of Delegated Approvals

To support transparency, staff will report bi-annually to Council on the status of all delegated permits and approvals granted. This will allow Council to determine the scale and success of the delegation authority. Applicants may request that a Minor DVP be referred to Council at any

time, even if it meets the delegation criteria. Similarly, the Director of Planning and Building retains discretion to refer any application to Council for consideration for any reason.

New Minor Development Variance Permit Guidelines Policy:

Pursuant to Section 498.1 of the *Local Government Act*, a bylaw delegating Minor DVPs must determine the proposed criteria for what is considered minor, and establish guidelines that the delegated decision maker must consider. As such, a new policy titled "Minor Development Variance Permit Guidelines Assessment Policy No. 6.39" has been drafted to guide staff's evaluation of Minor DVPs under the proposed delegated authority (Attachment E). The policy outlines key considerations, including:

- The scale of the variance;
- The potential impacts on neighbouring properties and the natural environment;
- Consistency with the Official Community Plan; and
- Alignment with the public interest.

Applicants must still provide a clear rationale and demonstrate efforts to minimize variances.

Application Lapses and Extensions:

Currently, OCP and Zoning Bylaw amendment applications expire one year after third reading if they have not been finalized, unless an extension is granted. Applicants, therefore, have one year to complete all of the required conditions imposed at third reading before final adoption. In practice, some applicants are unable to meet these requirements within the one-year timeframe due to factors such as delays in obtaining external agency approvals, complexity of the conditions, completing legal agreements, or resolving site-specific technical issues.

Under the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw, staff may grant two six-month extensions, allowing a maximum of two years for the finalization of conditions. With the current practice there are some rezoning applications that have remained active beyond this limit, resulting in inconsistencies, and dated conditions and requirements, and are technically expired.

To address this, the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw introduces a revised extension framework:

1. **First Extension:** A one-year extension may be granted by staff, provided that they can demonstrate that they are actively working on addressing the outstanding conditions imposed at third reading of the respective bylaw. This allows the same amount of time currently permitted.
2. **Second Extension:** In exceptional circumstances, Council may grant a final one-year extension, based on a recommendation from staff.

Under this framework, applicants may receive up to three years to complete the conditions for final adoption, provided that all extensions are requested and approved. An extension fee is required to be paid for each extension.

The expectation remains that applicants will meet conditions within one year, and extensions will only be supported under reasonable circumstances. Once all extension options are exhausted, the application will be closed. To proceed with a proposed development the applicant would then be required to submit a new application and begin the process again.

Establishing and enforcing time limits for post-third reading is considered best practice, as it:

1. Ensures development proposals reflect current planning policies, technical requirements, community priorities, and site conditions;
2. Improves administrative efficiency;
3. Reduces the backlog of inactive or outdated applications on file; and
4. Discourages prolonged holding of underutilized or vacant properties, which may delay new development opportunities, contribute to unsightliness, or encourage vandalism.

Transitional Provisions for Managing Existing Lapsed Applications

Enforcement of lapsed provisions under the current Development Procedures Bylaw has been inconsistent, leading to uncertainty for staff and applicants. Currently, about 27 rezoning applications at third reading and 14 at first reading remain open despite having lapsed and exhausted all available extensions.

Expired applications under the current Development Procedures Bylaw include:

1. **Applications at First Reading:** Applications submitted before adoption of the amended current Development Procedures Bylaw (July 25, 2023), that have not yet provided the required information. These applications were processed under the City's previous practice, where first reading occurred prior to the submission of complete application materials. There are currently 14 such applications that have not advanced since first reading where there is no activity by the applicant and are considered lapsed.

Several applications that received first reading under the previous procedures were submitted without detailed proposals, often to simply secure a market value increase. Over time, these files have evolved due to ownership changes or the introduction of revised concepts, which would typically require new applications. However, they continue under the original application since the City initially accepted them without detailed proposals. Once complete proposals are submitted, staff provide a full list of current submission requirements (e.g., technical studies). Ideally, these requirements would be addressed during a pre-application review. This sequential process of issuing requirements after first reading, followed by delays in response and disjointed submissions by applicants, has led to prolonged inactivity on these files and has created significant and ongoing administrative challenges for staff.

2. **Applications at Third Reading:** Applications that have exceeded time limits and all extensions, with no progress. To address these historic files, staff propose a one-time, final extension of one year to all lapsed applications. This would provide a consistent and clear deadline of one year from the date of adoption of the proposed Development

Procedures Bylaw, allowing applicants time to fulfill any outstanding requirements if they are interested in proceeding.

The following approach is proposed within the “Transitional Provisions” section in the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw:

1. Staff will issue a written notice outlining the outstanding submission requirements for each lapsed rezoning application.
2. Applicants will have 90 days to respond in writing and submit the required materials.
 - If the materials are received within the 90 days:
 - **Applications at first reading** have one year from adoption of the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw to reach third reading of the respective bylaw.
 - **Applications at third reading** have one year from adoption of the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw to receive final adoption of the respective bylaw.
3. If no response or submission is received from the applicant within 90 days, the application will be closed.

This measure ensures fairness to existing and serious applicants while reinforcing the City’s commitment to timely and consistent application processing. Moving forward, staff will strictly apply updated lapse and extension rules in the new bylaw, thereby creating a more streamlined process of file management.

Public Notification and Consultation:

The proposed Development Procedures Bylaw introduces a new section titled “Public Notification and Consultation” to consolidate requirements for public hearings, notifications, Development Information Meetings, and development signs in a single location. Where applicable, it references approved Council policies, including the Development Information Meetings Policy No. 6.20 and the Development Sign Policy No. 6.21.

Public Hearings

Recent provincial amendments to the *Local Government Act* prohibit public hearings for residential rezoning applications that are consistent with the OCP, and allow Council to waive public hearings for other OCP-aligned applications.

The proposed Development Procedures Bylaw enables Council to pre-emptively waive public hearings for commercial and industrial rezoning applications consistent with the OCP. This is a shift from the current process, where Council considers waivers on a case-by-case basis. Under the proposed bylaw:

- Public hearings will be waived for residential, commercial, and industrial rezoning applications that align with the OCP;
- OCP amendment applications will still require a public hearing; and
- Council and staff retain discretion to request a public hearing for any application where it is not prohibited.

This change is expected to reduce processing times and administration for OCP-consistent rezoning applications and support the timely delivery of commercial and industrial developments.

Public Notice Requirements

Public notifications remain required for all bylaw amendments and Development Variance Permits (DVPs). Currently, notifications for bylaw amendments follow the *Public Hearing Bylaw No. 3348-1984*, which requires notices to be sent to property owners and tenants within 45 metres of the subject property. For DVPs, the current Development Procedures Bylaw requires notices to go to all owners or tenants of properties adjacent to the subject property.

For fairness, consistency, and ease of administration, staff propose to standardize the notification distances by incorporating both into the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw as follows:

- A required 45 metre notice radius for OCP amendments, rezonings, and Temporary Use Permits.
- Introducing a required 30 metre notice radius for DVPs, and replacing the term "adjacent" with a defined distance. This change aims to eliminate the subjectivity around the term "adjacent" and ensure that more members of the public are notified of proposed changes in their neighbourhoods.

NEXT STEPS:

Should Council read *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025* a first, second and third time, the Bylaw and Policy would then be forwarded to Council for final adoption and approval, at an upcoming Regular Council Meeting. Staff will bring forward the accompanying Minor Development Variance Permit Guidelines Assessment Policy No. 6.39 at that same meeting for consideration by Council.

If the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw is adopted, the following bylaws would be repealed:

- *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 5879-1999;*
- *Maple Ridge Development Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 6478-2007;*
- *Maple Ridge Minor Development Variance Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 7952-2023;* and
- *Maple Ridge Public Hearing Bylaw No. 3348-1984.*

CONCLUSION:

The proposed *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025* establishes a comprehensive framework for managing development applications from intake to final decision. This also includes the delegation of authority on a number of minor applications to staff. By consolidating related policies, updating outdated provisions, and introducing clearer procedures, the bylaw is designed to streamline and simplify the application process, enhance transparency and predictability for applicants, and improve administrative efficiency. These

changes reflect best practices and support the City's commitment to continuous improvement in land use planning and development services. Staff will bring forward the draft Minor Development Variance Permit Guidelines Assessment Policy No. 6.39 for consideration at the same meeting that Council considers the adoption of the proposed Development Procedures Bylaw.

"Maureen Solmundson"

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Attachments:

- (A) *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 5879-1999*
(Current Development Procedures Bylaw)
- (B) *Maple Ridge Development Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 6478-2007*
- (C) *Maple Ridge Minor Development Variance Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 7952-2023*
- (D) *Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025*
(Proposed Development Procedures Bylaw)
- (E) Draft Minor Development Variance Permit Guidelines
Assessment Policy No. 6.39

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment A - Development Procedures Bylaw No.5879-1999 (Current Development Procedures Bylaw).pdf - Attachment B - Development Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 6478-2007.pdf - Attachment C - Minor Development Variance Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 7952-2023.pdf - Attachment D - Maple Ridge Development Procedures Bylaw No. 8081-2025 (Proposed Development Procedures Bylaw).docx - Attachment E - Draft Minor DVP Guidelines Assessment Policy No. 6.39.docx
Final Approval Date:	Nov 28, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

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Hasib Nadvi, Deputy Director of Planning and Building

James Stiver, Director of Planning and Building

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