



Reducing Red Tape: Summary of actions

2021 Reporting:

Business License Bylaw Update and Online Supports: In 2021, The City of Red Deer's Business License Bylaw was amended to provide enhanced clarity for businesses in response to feedback received. The bylaw's application process information/guide has also been moved online to aid applicants through the process.

Taxi License Process Moved Online: In 2021, The City of Red Deer moved the Taxi License process online for ease of use and enhanced clarity of process for Red Deer's local taxi/ride-for-hire industry.

Land Use Bylaw Amendment to Remove Change of Use Requirement: In 2021, where a proposed land use meets the LUB standards and is not deemed to have a adverse impact on surrounding uses, the requirement to apply for a 'change of use' is no longer required.

Online Red Tape Reporting Portal: The City of Red Deer has developed an online customer service portal to allow staff, citizens, and customers to report their experiences with municipal processes, identify municipal Red Tape, and surface any other processes or services that may require review and improvement.

City of Red Deer Business Visitation Program: In 2021, City Administration initiated a Business Visitation Program to ensure that new and existing businesses in our city have the supports and information that they need, and to ensure that The City is aware of and responsive to any business challenges or municipal processes or requirements that are impacting the local economy/business environment.

Collaboration with Red Deer Polytechnic: In 2021, the City of Red Deer's Land and Economic Development department has collaborated with Red Deer Polytechnic on hosting a Franchise Fair to enhance students' awareness of potential business opportunities post-graduation.

Quarterly Planning and Development Meetings with Red Deer and District Chamber of Commerce and BILD Red Deer: Initiated in 2020, and continued throughout 2021 (where possible amidst the pandemic), these regular connection points between The City, BILD, and the Chamber provide opportunities for The City to hear feedback from these organizations and their membership on processes and programs that are working for our business and development community, those that may be perceived as 'Red Tape' and to solicit ideas for improvement, and for information to flow between both organizations to support responsive services and supports for our local businesses.

Land Use Bylaw Refresh: This project continued throughout 2021, with the specified focus areas in place and an overall goal of increasing the number of permitted uses and variety of uses allowed in the Land Use Bylaw to promote flexibility for our business community. A monthly questionnaire is available throughout this multi-year project to ensure we are consulting with stakeholders and responsive to their feedback.

Land Use Bylaw Amendment Fastrack Process: In 2021, The City of Red Deer shortened timelines for simple rezonings to expedite the LUB amendment process for applicants.

Development and Testing of 'E-Apply' and 'E-Plans' Online Portals: Throughout 2021, a significant amount of work has been dedicated to preparing our E-Plans and E-Apply project for launch in February, 2022. This project will make Building Permit and Development Permit applications, process information, and payment options available online, along with other resources and information for applicants. Plans are underway to incorporate Subdivision Applications into this function in 2022/2023.

Development Permit Review Timeline Reductions and Process Improvements: In 2021, The City's Municipal Planning Committee Review Team has worked to identify short, medium and long term goals to improve the Development Permit process. Changes identified in 2021 include potential incentives for applicants to

participate in predevelopment meetings order to speed up timelines for applicants; changes to the civil drawing review requirements have also been identified in order in support of speedier process. * Currently The City of Red Deer provides a decision on 'permitted use' DPs within 3-5 business days.

Development and implementation of a 'nexus' lane for proven applicants or simple applications: In 2021, a draft policy was created to expedite application approvals for simple applications or those from proven applicants. The City intends to align its implementation in 2022 with the launch of the eApply and ePlans online portals. The processes will be tested by local development community organization, BILD and Red Deer Construction Association, members.

Committees Bylaw Update to Enhance Subdivision Officer Decision Powers: City Administration, throughout 2021, prepared an analysis of enabling additional decision-making powers of the Subdivision Officer to expedite timelines for applicants and minimize the extent to which the Municipal Planning Commission is required to make decisions on minor variances to the Land Use Bylaw. The analysis that Administration has prepared will go before Council in February 2022.

***Subdivision Timelines:** The City of Red Deer currently exceeds the Provincial requirement to issue a decision on a complete subdivision application within 60 days, with an average decision response time of 40-45 days.

Simplifying Municipal Infrastructure Requirements for Developers: Over the past year, The City of Red Deer has been trying to minimize the number of agreements required for developers by consolidating municipal infrastructure requirements wherever possible. For each Development Permit, we review the municipal infrastructure requirements and determine the method that will have the least points of contact, cost less in fees, and provide the developer with the best result.

Subdivision Checklist Project and Approval Process Online: Initial work was commenced in 2021 to prepare for making a comprehensive checklist available to applicants, and to guide applicants through the process. Presently, the Subdivision Officer guides applicants through the process on a case-by-case basis. This work is expected to be completed in 2022.

"Leading Forward" Economic Incentives: In the summer of 2021, The City of Red Deer offered the 3rd intake for the "Leading Forward - Economic Incentives" program. This 3rd program intake made \$100k available through a city-wide Demolition of Vacant and Derelict Properties rebate, \$200k available through a New Residential Units in Existing Structures grant, and \$750k available through a New Residential and Mixed-Use Developments grant. To date, The City of Red Deer has approved **\$1.9 million**, and signed agreements for **\$1.6 million dollars**, in incentive funding with local businesses and developers which has resulted in approximately 26 facade improvements at downtown properties, 10 CPTED assessments to improve security and safety at approved properties, 15 new residential units created (24 more currently in progress) in the downtown, 2 Environmental Site Assessments, 3 Utility Connection Upgrades, and 3 demolitions of vacant or derelict properties in the city (2 in downtown, 1 outside of downtown).

Red Tape Reduction Plan: In 2021, The City continued implementation of its corporate Red Tape Reduction Strategy. Approximately 20 of the initial 30 recommended actions have been implemented (many are multi-year undertakings).

In late 2019, in response to community feedback and Provincial efforts, The City of Red Deer's City Manager directed administration to develop a plan to implement a municipal Red Tape Reduction Initiative. The project was proposed to occur in 3 phases:

1. Inventory of relevant actions taken by The City within last 2 years
2. Interviews with department heads and key internal stakeholders to identify potential future corporate Red Tape Reductions
3. Engaging external stakeholders through surveys to solicit potential Red Tape Reduction ideas, and reporting back on steps take

Phases 1 & 2 are complete and spanned 2019 and 2020, with the online stakeholder survey being conducted with key business partners in the community. 60 responses were received, themed, and included in the organization's draft report on the initiative. As a result, Phase 3 reporting back to the community and implementation of ongoing Red Tape Reduction reporting tools (on The City's webpage) continued throughout 2021.

Major Event Strategy: The next phase in the implementation of the Major Event Strategy has begun with hiring a consultant to assist in developing a business plan to guide the transition of our regional tourism entity (Tourism Red Deer) into a Destination Development Corporation that will be a central point of contact for local and regional tourism, major events, and destination development activities.

Public Parking Asset Management: In 2021, The City completed an Asset Management Plan for all public parking infrastructure.

Special Event Permit Online and Timeline Improvements: In 2021, the City of Red Deer implemented the 'My Event' portal to allow online applications, as well as process changes to eliminate unnecessary internal department referrals to expedite application timelines. Identification of opportunities for improvements to this process is ongoing. This process has allowed The City to identify a range of events that could be leveraged jointly with other municipal tourism activities and services.

Parking Management Downtown in Support of Business and Tourism: In 2021, The City of Red Deer went out for RFI to identify new technology and infrastructure options to upgrade public parking infrastructure to enhance user friendliness, efficiency, and to promote business and tourism activity throughout our downtown core. Public consultation and installation will occur in 2022.

Central Alberta Economic Partnership Collaboration: The City of Red Deer, in 2021, collaborated with Central Alberta Economic Partnership in conjunction with 35 municipalities to increase awareness of opportunities to utilize our regional strengths to enhance transportation and logistics prospects for the region.

Intermunicipal Development Plan Update: Initial CAO and Mayor collaborative conversations have taken place in 2021 to prepare for updates to the IDP in 2022 that will include updates to our regional economic development strategies in consideration of Alberta's long-term strategies.

Community Standards Bylaw Update: In 2021, The City adopted a revised Community Standards Bylaw that included components critical to tourism and economic development, including clarity around municipal standards for Vacant and Derelict Properties, including the ability to designate a nuisance property, to ensure that negative impacts of such sites are mitigated and do not negatively impact business activity and tourism in our city.

2020 Reporting:

Streamlining and Speeding-Up the Business Licensing process: The City of Red Deer has established an online application process. This process, up to and including payments, can be completed fully online. This makes the application process timeframe shorter as the customer enters the data into the system. We have made internal system changes with E-Forms as well to make sure the information that is going to our customers is consistent. The City of Red Deer has a fully paperless process where applications can be completed online and via email. Payments and account updates are accepted through MyCity/MyLicence on the City's website. We have updated our website to clearly outline the process for Business Licensing, including all necessary forms, clarifying language and contact information.

Downtown Economic Incentives Program: In 2019, City Council approved \$850,000 in funding to promote residential development, support new and existing businesses in creating safe and vibrant spaces for their businesses, and to promote redevelopment of underutilized properties in the city's downtown area. In 2020, The City opened 2 intake periods to downtown businesses to submit applications to the following incentive programs - Residential and Mixed-Use Development Grant (2 applications approved), Utility Connection Fee Rebate (2 applications approved), Environmental Site Assessment Rebate (2 applications approved), Façade and Storefront Improvement Rebate (26 applications approved), and the Demolition of Vacant and Derelict Properties Rebate (3 applications approved). Approximately \$720,000 in funds have been approved for 35 successful applications. Program metrics for each incentive are being collected throughout 2021. As of January 2021, 5 projects have been completed as a result of this program.

My Events: Creation of 'My Events' addition to City of Red Deer website to simplify the process of hosting and collaborating with The City of Red Deer for tourism and event-based businesses. This service was in development throughout 2020 and metrics will be tracked in 2021.

Online services: The City of Red Deer now processes Alberta Culture Online Permitting and Clearance requirements for subdivisions on behalf of applicants to save them time and money.

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Smart start program: Partnering with local business development organizations (Community Futures, Business Link, RDC, Olds College, etc.) to implement the Smart Start Program in Red Deer. This program assists new businesses with a variety of supports to help them start successfully and is a valuable forum for any potential "Red Tape" to be identified to City staff and addressed through The City's ongoing Red Tape Reduction efforts. Monitoring of program metrics will occur throughout 2021.

Landfill review: The City of Red Deer conducted a range of studies on old landfills throughout the city so that developers would not incur the costs of doing this when applying for a reduction of the 300m Provincial landfill setback

City of Red Deer ESA Review Requirements: The City has also reviewed and updated Environmental Site Assessment review requirements to be more flexible with development timelines and steps, reducing duplication while ensuring safe develop-able lands.

Application review: Reviewed servicing aspects of subdivision application requirements for updates to the application form in 2021, and improved early communication of new required materials due to recent case law.

Application mergers: Combining the Development Permit & Business License Home Occupation application. This will make it simpler for the customer so they only have to submit one application form that is used by both areas. This should be implemented within Q1, 2021.

The City of Red Deer is also working on Development Permit notification to Business Licensing for changes to existing uses, so if a business does a Development Permit-Change of Use, the Development Officer sends the application form to Licensing for notification so the customer does not have to duplicate the information on two separate application forms.

Development permit review: The City implemented development permit review and referral timeline reductions and overall process improvements.

Nexus lane: In late 2020, The City began the early stages of developing and implementing policy for a 'nexus' lane for proven applicants or simple applications to expedite the process for these applicants.

Single point-of-contact: Implemented a single point-of-contact for more complex development applications.

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Development Permit (DP) Process Improvements: Our targets for review and issuance of DPs is 1 week for simple Permitted Use applications and 3-4 weeks for Discretionary Use applications. This is shorter than the 40 day legislated requirement. We have accomplished this by streamlining review processes, removing the number of people required to review, tracking and referring everything electronically. Further, we continue to review and modify application checklists based on customer feedback. These are available on our website and in person. The City's website has been updated for ease of use and customer service. It continues to be modified based on feedback and review by staff. Due to COVID, we were able to establish an electronic process for Development Permit application and issuance. Our online MyCity system has allowed for online payments since 2015.

Application simplification: In 2020, The City began work on combining the Development Permit & Business License Home Occupation application. This will make it simpler for the customer so they only have to submit one application form that is used by both areas. This should be implemented within Q1, 2021.

Development Permit notification/review: The City of Red Deer is also working on Development Permit notification to Business Licensing for changes to existing uses, so if a business does a Development Permit-Change of Use, the Development Officer sends the application form to Licensing for notification so the customer does not have to duplicate the information on two separate application forms.

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Prioritized Land Use Bylaw (LUB) Refresh: Changes to The City's Land Use Bylaw to emphasize clarity, flexibility, and business friendliness. In 2020, amendments were approved to expand office uses to more areas within the city, and to encourage higher density residential uses in the downtown with reduced parking requirements to encourage residential development in the downtown. Work to refresh the LUB will continue throughout 2021. Changes were also made to promote flexibility by allowing more decisions to be made by Development Officers as opposed to requiring a decision of Council.

City of Red Deer Red Tape Reduction Initiative: In late 2019, in response to community feedback and Provincial efforts, The City of Red Deer's City Manager directed administration to develop a plan to implement a municipal Red Tape Reduction Initiative. The project was proposed to occur in 3 phases:

1. Inventory of relevant actions taken by The City within last 2 years
2. Interviews with department heads and key internal stakeholders to identify potential future corporate Red Tape Reductions
3. Engaging external stakeholders through surveys to solicit potential Red Tape Reduction ideas, and reporting back on steps taken

Phases 1 & 2 are complete and spanned 2019 and 2020, with the online stakeholder survey being conducted with key business partners in the community. 60 responses were received, themed, and included in the organization's draft report on the initiative. Phase 3 reporting back to the community and implementation of ongoing Red Tape Reduction reporting tools (on The City's webpage) and performance monitoring framework is expected to occur in Q2/Q3 2021.

Major Event Strategy and Destination Development Framework: This work identifies a new leadership model that provides a one-stop approach to support large/major events and attract new events to Red Deer and area. This new approach allows Red Deer to broaden its tourism and economic development goals of becoming a major event and tourism destination.

Central Alberta Tourism Alliance & City of Red Deer partnership: The City of Red Deer continues to collaborate with other tourism organizations and neighbouring municipalities to collaborate on destination development initiatives that help strengthen the tourism industry.

District 50: This project will create a new tourism attraction which will allow for many businesses to flourish with the addition of new visitors. This may also result in the addition of more businesses associated with the tourism industry.

MyEvents: City of Red Deer webpage platform development to support the provincial vision for growth in tourism sectors. This will allow more efficient processing, tracking, and growth as we increase our event based tourism opportunities.

Membership in regional economic development groups through Central Alberta Economic Partnership, Tourism Red Deer, and Central Alberta Access Prosperity.

Asset management plans have been developed over the past 2 budget cycles for a majority of City-owned assets.