



Development Permit Process Improvements

What applicants need to know

The Town of Okotoks is modernizing its Development Permit process in response to industry feedback on processing timelines and the need for greater clarity in application requirements and approval processes. These improvements also respond to Bill 28, which aims to streamline development approvals across Alberta.

Previous Process

Under the previous process, Development Permits were approved through a two-stage review. While an application could be approved, the Development Permit was not issued until all Prior to Release Conditions (PTR) were satisfied.

The process typically included:

- Application submission and initial technical review.
- Notice of Decision (NOD) containing **Prior to Release (PTR) conditions**.
- Completion of additional requirements (PTR conditions) after approval, including:
 - Development Site Servicing Plans (DSSP)
 - Site Lighting Plans
 - Development Agreement requirements
 - Performance securities
- Multiple rounds of plan review and revisions before the permit issuance. In some cases, technical plan reviews required site plan changes, triggering a Development Permit amendment.
- Issuance of the Development Permit only after all PTR conditions were satisfied, delaying the start of development

This approach frequently resulted in additional review cycles, extended timelines, and less predictable permit issuance for both applicants and the Town.

New Process

The new process removes the **Prior to Release (PTR)** stage entirely by requiring technical plans and supporting documents to be submitted as part of a complete Development Permit application package, instead of after development permit approval.

Key changes include:

- All plans, including DSSPs, landscaping, and site lighting plans where required, are reviewed during the application review period. Reviewing these technical requirements earlier in the process reduces the overall time to development commencement.
- A Development Permit is issued following the 21-day appeal period, allowing development to commence in accordance with the conditions of approval.
- Conditions that were previously addressed through the PTR process will either be addressed before a permit is approved or as a condition of approval, rather than delaying permit issuance.
- Greater emphasis is placed on the pre-application process to support the submission of complete application packages.

Applicants can expect a more streamlined process with:

- Greater certainty regarding application requirements through updated applications forms and checklists
- Fewer resubmissions and iterative review cycles
- Earlier completion of technical reviews, resulting in a reduced overall timeframe from application submission to development commencement
- Improved accountability for both applicants and the municipality.

