



INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: December 9, 2025

From: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

File No: P 24-14

Subject: **Housing Accelerator Fund- Pre-Approved Building Plans & Designs**

Prepared by: Chris Oliver, Planning Manager

Reviewed by: Brent Magnan, General Manager of Community Development

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report titled “Housing Accelerator Fund- Pre-Approved Building Plans & Designs”, dated December 9, 2025, be received for information.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Invest in Infrastructure – We will invest in building, improving and maintaining infrastructure to meet the needs of, and to provide a high quality of life for, current and future generations.

BACKGROUND

HAF ‘Initiative 5 – Pre-Approved Building Plans & Designs’ is intended to introduce a series of building forms and designs that can be streamlined through City processes, including:

1. **Development Permit Exemptions (pre-approval)**
 - Following a review of the Federal and Provincial catalogues and Kelowna’s processes.
2. **Site Standards Design Bulletin** for Infill and Plex Projects
3. **Pre-reviewed Building Permits** is being explored as an additional option to expedite approvals further and is not a direct commitment in the HAF application.

A key aspect of this initiative is adopting pre-approved building plans from the CMHC Design Catalogue. The catalogue aims to boost housing supply while supporting affordable, diverse, and climate-resilient communities consistently with regional designs.

There are three milestones in the HAF #5 Initiative. Currently, the City is working through:



Figure 1: Initiative 5 Milestones

Discussion

As part of Initiative 5, City staff have been working interdepartmentally (Building, Development Engineering, and Planning) to identify opportunities for developers or homeowners to use the pre-approved designs. While the main focus of Initiative 5 is to include Form and Character Development Permit (DP) exemptions, additional streamlined opportunities have been evaluated with staff and CMHC. Staff are currently working with CMHC to explore additional opportunities to eliminate cost, such as removing the need to have a designer update the designs to a site-specific context, creating a “shelf-ready” package for homeowners. As part of that process, there would be additional time and cost savings for homeowners with only minor submittals (e.g., a site plan) being required.

1. Development Permit Exemptions

Currently, a Multiple Residential, Intensive Residential DP is required to build three or more duplexes, a triplex, or a fourplex. The DP costs \$2,190, and adds time, which, depending on the complexity of the application, would take 1-2 months (Figure 2).

As proposed in the City’s HAF application, pre-approved designs, are included as exemptions in the Official Community Plan (OCP). For example, the OCP can outline specified forms or specific designs that are exempt from DP requirements. Staff are proposing to exempt duplexes outright from a required DP given the rising popularity and community-wide permission that has followed Bill 44 (SSMUH). In addition, to align with the City’s commitments under HAF, two CMHC Design Catalogue designs are proposed for inclusion in the program, and exemption from a required form and character DP. The eligible designs are outlined in greater detail below.

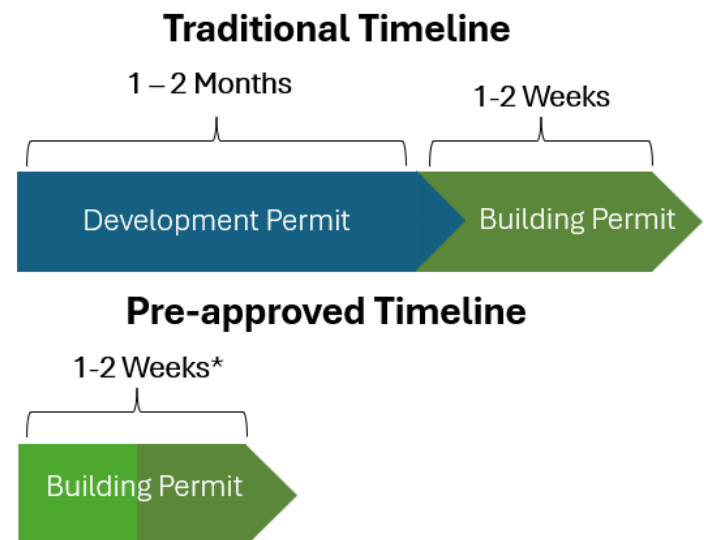


Figure 2: Timeline Figure *Opportunity for shorter timeline with “shelf ready”, complete Part 9 BPs

These plex designs would currently only be permitted in existing 'RP1 -Residential Plex' zoned areas in the Boucherie and Westbank Urban Centers.

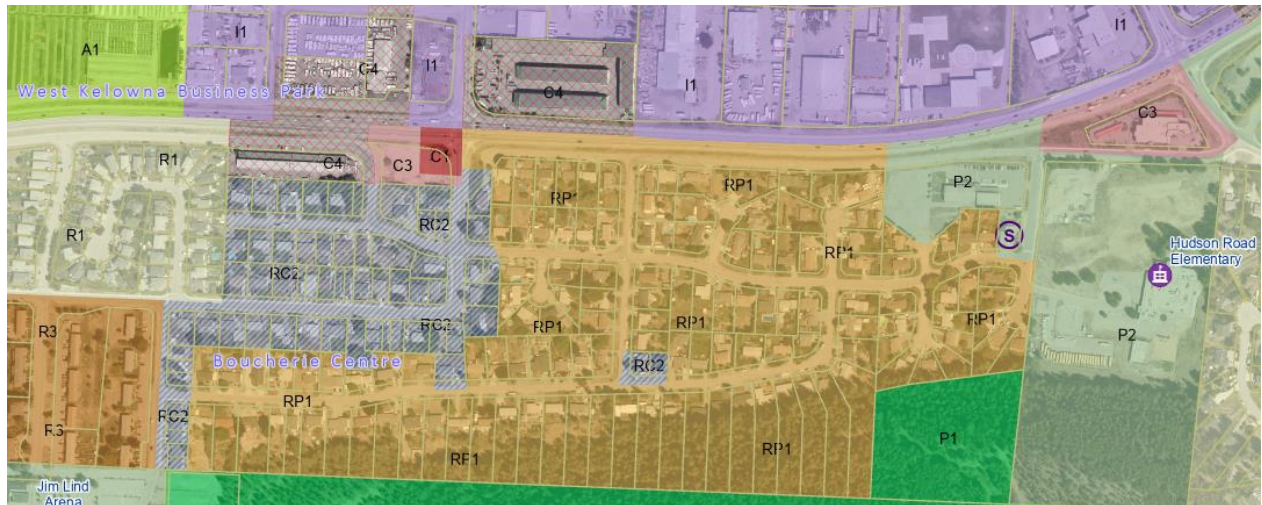


Figure 3. RP1 Zoned Area in Boucherie Centre



Figure 4. RP1 Zoned Area North of Westbank Centre

CMHC Design Catalogue

As part of Initiative 5, staff reviewed the BC Standardized Housing Designs Catalogue, the City of Kelowna's Fast-Track Pre-Approved Designs, and the CMHC Design Catalogue to explore how these designs will fit into a West Kelowna context. Based on a variety of factors, including the level of technical detail, design cost savings, and permissions from original designers, it was determined that the CMHC catalogue would be the only suitable option to consider with the time constraints associated with this HAF

initiative. A key benefit of using the CMHC catalogue is that the City's will be included as a "community partner" similar to the City of Kelowna, Burnaby, Vancouver and more. The CMHC catalogue designs have all been created to meet the BC Building Code (BCBC) standards, and to be Step 4 of the BC Energy Code. The catalogue includes designs for plexes, accessory dwelling units, and row houses. Based on the City's existing processes for not requiring a form and character DP for ADUs (Carriage Houses), plex designs from the catalogue are the only consideration for the DP exemption process outlined above.

With only two designs included in the catalogue, staff have explored opportunities to provide variation in form and character, with different options to illustrate how the designs can be adjusted to fit a West Kelowna context. The adjustments to the exterior design will only be for the cladding, as the designs meet step 4 of the BC Energy Code, and adjusting the interiors or footprint of the pre-approved designs would be costly.

Fourplex 02 – Original Design



Fourplex 02 – Variations



Figure 7. BC Design Catalogue Fourplex 02 with Variations

Fourplex 01 – Original Design



Fourplex 01 – Variations



Figure 6. BC Design Catalogue Fourplex 01 with Variations

The intent of highlighting these “variations” isn’t to include all of them as specific exemptions in the OCP. Instead, the intent is to highlight the amount of variation that a property owner can use when tailoring the exterior to their property's context.

While these are more modern designs, intended to provide a high degree of energy efficiency, there are examples of existing houses in the community that match this aesthetic (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Energy Efficient House in Lakeview Heights

2. Site Standards Design Bulletin

Within the West Kelowna context, there are specific challenges to designing infill and plex style housing, such as limited lane access, higher parking requirements when compared to provincial recommendations, and challenging topography. In addition to these unique challenges, there are other key lessons learned from other municipalities experienced in implementing infill housing and plex developments. In an effort to provide additional resources for residents looking to build plex-style development, such as those presented from the CMHC catalogue, a Site Design Bulletin is being prepared (Attachment 1 and Figure 8). Examples of applicable best practices that may be included in a guide include:

- Landscape design
- Stormwater management
- Parking access and circulation
- Fencing and screening
- Refuse, recycling and service areas
- Good neighbour considerations
- Additional elements that support well-functioning sites

PARKING, PEDESTRIAN ACCESS, & CIRCULATION

Why this Matters for Infill

Without parking access and functional site circulation, infill can create congestion and increase conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles - issues that were highlighted as major public concerns in the City's Infill Housing Strategy Engagement.

Guidelines to Support Better Design Outcomes

The spatial constraints and additional number of units on a site demands strategic parking location. The visual impact of parking should be minimized through landscaping and pavement treatment.

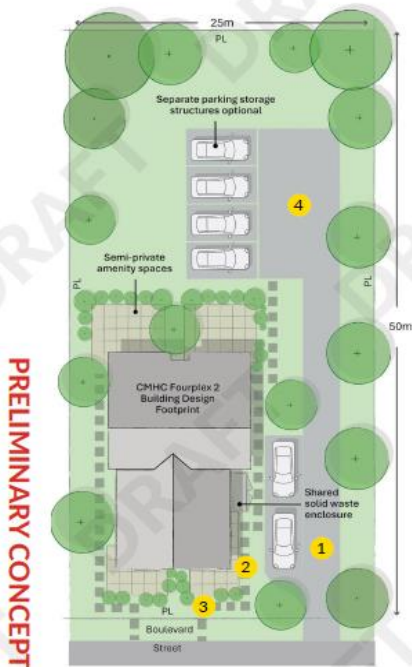


Figure 8. Sample of West Kelowna Site Design Bulletin

3. Pre-Reviewed Building Permits

In addition to OCP DP exemptions, staff have also explored options to adopt pre-reviewed plans for Build Permit (BP). The intent would be to pre-review building plans so submission requirements can be reduced (e.g. only provide site plan and applicable documents), thereby reducing application costs and review timelines to expedite approvals. Staff are exploring what fee reductions could also apply, with less review time required for pre-reviewed designs. Some aspects of the BP fees are intended to cover inspections and processing, so eliminating fees would not cover applicable costs.

As part of pre-reviewed BPs, staff also explored catalogue designs from other provinces. One key design that is well-suited to West Kelowna is an ADU (Carriage House) design from Alberta. The design is well-suited to West Kelowna as it includes a two-car garage

space below the main living area, which has been one of the most popular formats for carriage houses in West Kelowna. Staff are exploring options to have the design modified to comply with the BC Building Code. While the ADU would not benefit from a DP exemption, as the City does not require form and character development permits for ADUs (Carriage Houses), it would benefit from being a “pre-reviewed” design for BP.

Pre-reviewed Building Permit processes align with HAF Initiative 5, and staff are working with CMHC to determine how viable this step is considering the design terms, conditions, and permissions from the original architects. Staff will include an update as OCP amendments for DP exemptions are brought forward.

NEXT STEPS

As noted in Figure 1, the second milestone of this initiative is “OCP amendments”, which need to be completed by February 2026. In order to meet the commitments made under the City’s HAF application, OCP amendments will be brought forward to allow for Form & Character DP exemptions for:

- Duplexes (no longer required if more than 3 buildings); and
- CMHC Design Catalogue designs Plex 01 and Plex 02 (with permissions for variations in exterior cladding).

In addition to these changes, staff will also be initiating work on a Site Standards Guide and continuing to explore opportunities for “shelf-ready” designs to reduce timelines and costs for applicants.

PowerPoint: Yes No

Attachments:

1. Sample West Kelowna Site Design Bulletin