

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this Assessment is to evaluate whether a community's development review process is transparent, predictable, efficient, and proportional to the scale of the proposed development. The goal is not to reduce public oversight or eliminate community input. Rather, it is to identify opportunities to improve the development review process while maintaining thoughtful planning and public accountability.

PART A – PROCESS TRANSPARENCY

Goal Can an applicant easily understand the approval process before submitting an application?

Questions

- Is there a published development review flowchart?
- Is there a written development review guide?
- Are application requirements clearly documented?
- Are all required approvals identified up front?
- Are review timelines published?
- Is there a single point of contact for applicants?

RATING GUIDE

Excellent

- Process is clearly documented and publicly available.
- Applicants understand the process before filing.

Good

- Most information is available, but some steps require staff interpretation.

Needs Improvement

- Requirements are scattered or difficult to understand.
- Applicants often learn requirements during the review process.

PART B – REVIEW EFFICIENCY

Goal Does the municipality review applications efficiently?

Questions

- Are departments reviewing applications concurrently?
- Are comments consolidated?
- Are duplicate reviews minimized?
- Are electronic submissions accepted?
- Can applicants track review status online?
- Are revisions handled promptly?

RATING GUIDE

Excellent

- Reviews occur simultaneously where practical.
- Comments are coordinated.
- Technology supports the process.

Good

- Some parallel review occurs.
- Most comments are coordinated.

Needs Improvement

- Sequential reviews dominate.
- Applicants receive multiple rounds of conflicting comments.

PART C – APPROVAL PREDICTABILITY

Goal Can an applicant reasonably predict what approvals will be required and how long they will take?

Questions

- Are objective approval standards used?
- How often are projects requiring multiple continuances?
- Are timelines generally met?
- Are by-right projects approved administratively?
- Are discretionary approvals limited to projects that truly warrant them?

RATING GUIDE

Excellent

- Approval criteria are objective.
- Timelines are predictable.

Good

- Most approvals are predictable.

Needs Improvement

- Outcomes depend heavily on discretion.
- Timelines vary significantly.

PART D – ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Goal Does the municipality have the staffing and resources needed to process housing development?

Questions

- Dedicated planning staff?
- Dedicated engineering review?
- Building inspection capacity?
- Legal support?
- GIS capability?
- Outside consultant availability?
- Staff vacancy issues?

RATING GUIDE

Excellent

- Staffing generally keeps pace with workload.

Good

- Some resource constraints.

Needs Improvement

- Staffing shortages regularly delay projects.

PART E – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Goal Move away from “Do residents or stakeholders get input?” toward “Is public engagement constructive?”

Questions

- Are neighbors notified early?
- Are expectations clearly communicated?
- Are meetings focused on planning issues?
- Is feedback gathered before formal hearings?
- Are design concerns separated from broader policy debates?

RATING GUIDE

Excellent

- Community input improves projects.

Good

- Public input is meaningful but occasionally delays projects.

Needs Improvement

- Public engagement is largely reactive, repetitive, or unpredictable.

Overall Assessment

Category	Assessment
Process Transparency	Strong / Moderate / Opportunity
Review Efficiency	Strong / Moderate / Opportunity
Approval Predictability	Strong / Moderate / Opportunity
Organizational Capacity	Strong / Moderate / Opportunity
Public Engagement	Strong / Moderate / Opportunity
Continuous Improvement	Strong / Moderate / Opportunity

Important Note: When giving your overall assessment, pay particular attention to the difference between process design (what an ordinance or formal policy requires) and process performance (how performance measures in actual practice).

Key Takeaways

After completing this assessment, identify the three most important observations about your community.
