

June 27, 2025

To the Fernie Building and Development Community:

We want to thank everyone who has communicated with us regarding their concerns.

Your message was clear: permit timelines are a real challenge for your projects, your businesses, your clients, and the community.

We recognize the urgency of these concerns, and we are committed to working together to deliver improvements.

Senior leadership for both the Canadian Home Builders' Association – Central Interior (CHBA CI) and City of Fernie have met directly to discuss the challenges and identify constructive paths forward. The discussion was transparent, solutions-focused, and grounded in a shared goal: accelerating permitting timelines and improving communication.

Key Issues Raised in the Discussion:

- Builders are experiencing long and unpredictable permit timelines.
- The City is receiving applications with incomplete, erroneous or missing information.
- Earlier communication regarding the identification of incomplete or missing information is needed to help builders respond promptly.
- The overall volume of applications is difficult to manage with current resources.

Our Joint Commitments:

We are taking a collaborative, phased approach to address these challenges. The following steps are already underway:

1. Accelerating Permits Through Capacity Gains:

- The City has authorized overtime for Building Officials, hired additional administrative staff, and is in the process of hiring a new Building Official.
- Work is also underway to secure additional surge capacity for peak periods.
- Staff are preparing recommendations for Council in the coming weeks.

2. Streamlining and Modernizing the Process:

- The new Cloudpermit digital permitting platform launched June 4. It requires complete applications before reviews can begin, reducing delays related to missing documentation and improving transparency.
- The City is now tracking processing times for each step in the permit process, enabling data-driven improvements and greater service accountability.

3. Improving Communication and Sector Education:

- We are jointly reviewing best practices from other communities and are adapting clear bulletins and checklists for use in Fernie.
- The City and the CHBA CI will host an in-person builder workshop in Fernie on August 18, to walk through the permit process, highlight common issues, and answer questions.

4. Ongoing Partnership and Dialogue:

- Monthly check-ins between the CHBA CI and the City will ensure continued momentum and transparency. We will work together to share information, review practices, and distribute material to the local building community.

Together we are committed to sustained action in supporting a sustainable and successful building and development sector.

We believe that through ongoing collaboration between the City, CHBA-CI, and the building community, we can make real progress.

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