



**MORE NEIGHBOURS  
TORONTO**

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

**RE: PH20.5 - Development Review Timeline Metrics**

***About More Neighbours Toronto***

[More Neighbours Toronto](#) is a volunteer-only organization of housing advocates that believe in building more multi-family homes of all kinds for those who dream of building their lives in Toronto. We advocate for reforms to increase our city's ability to build more homes in every neighbourhood. We are a big-tent organization with members across the political spectrum who are committed to counterbalancing the anti-housing agenda that has dominated Toronto's politics, created an affordability crisis, and cost burdened a new generation of aspiring residents. We are firmly committed to the principle that housing is a human right and believe Toronto should be inclusive and welcoming to all.

***Position***

More Neighbours Toronto is encouraged to see the reduction in approval timelines arising from improvements in city processes. With housing starts falling 48% on a year-on-year basis, accelerating approvals for housing construction is critical to arresting that decline and helping projects move forward. Delays in approvals increase project (and housing) costs, create uncertainty, and ultimately delay future families from moving into their homes. Every opportunity should be to streamline our approval processes so that we can get more housing, faster.

While good progress has been made, we urge Council to recognize that Toronto is still significantly behind its peers and more work remains to be done. According to the Canadian Homebuilders Association's Benchmarking study<sup>1</sup>, the average timeline for approvals in Toronto is 25 months, an improvement from the previous timeline of 32 but still the second-slowest of the municipalities surveyed. Toronto is slightly slower than Markham (22.6 months), slower than Ottawa (16.9 months), and much slower than Vancouver (7.7 months), Calgary (4.2 months) and Edmonton (3.4 months). Furthermore, the averages mask significant variations in approval timelines and the uncertainties that causes.

There is also the potential for adverse incentives as the report points out, where the City generally refuses proposals that cannot be approved within 60 days. While that would improve the average decision timeline, it will have the adverse effect of rejecting otherwise workable proposals. Our recommendation is that the City should default to approving projects wherever possible, recognizing that if plans cannot be approved within 60 days, that signals more that the approval process takes too long than that the proposal should be refused.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.chba.ca/assets/pdf/CHBA+Municipal+Benchmarking+Study-3rd+Edition-2024/>

We thank staff for their work on this project. Housing delayed is housing denied, and the City should not stand in the way. Other cities demonstrate that fast approvals do not need to come at the expense of quality housing.

Regards,

Hongyu Xiao,  
More Neighbours Toronto