



Red Tape
Research



FLUSHING OUT THE NONSENSE

An analysis of municipal renovation
permitting across Canada

JANUARY 2024



Introduction

The family is growing. The in-laws are moving in. An adult child and their family are staying with their parents until they save a down payment for a place of their own. These are just a few of many reasons a homeowner might want or need to renovate their home so that it meets their evolving needs.

This report reviews the permitting costs and requirements associated with converting a simple powder room into a full bathroom in 12 municipalities¹ across Canada (see appendix for results). The proposed renovation requires the removal of a non-load-bearing wall, the addition of a shower bath, structural changes to the existing plumbing, and electrical work. The estimated cost of the project is \$20,000.²

While one might think, “*It’s just a bathroom extension!*” even before a wall is brought down or a shower is added, homeowners face numerous hurdles and costs. Good luck trying to figure it all out. This report seeks to uncover these costs and requirements. It examines what is required for a homeowner to convert a powder room³ into a full bath, within the existing square footage of a home, across Canada’s major cities. Beyond upfront permit costs that are based on the value of a project, homeowners may need to obtain and pay fees for various documents to support their

Case Study: Converting a powder room into a full bathroom.

Project requirements: Taking down a wall (structural change), new plumbing and fixtures (e.g., bath and shower), and some electrical work (e.g., ventilation).

Other notes: Non-historical home from the 1980s.

All within existing square footage.

Construction value: \$20,000



application, which can take weeks if not months to obtain approval. Ultimately, while it should be simple, it is far from.

If there are that many hurdles for a bathroom conversion, imagine trying to build a secondary suite, something the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) has previously showcased as being a way for homeowners to help offset housing costs. Secondary suites, coach homes, lane way homes, etc. can also allow individual homeowners to add to Canada’s housing stock. However, as new research has found, “high construction and permitting costs and extensive building requirements play a dissuading role.”⁴

With cities across Canada facing a serious shortage-of-housing crisis, all orders of government must work together to create an efficient system to ensure the stock Canada requires to keep rent and housing costs affordable can be realized.⁵ The report highlights

¹ The 12 municipalities examined are Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, Moncton, Charlottetown, and St. John’s.

² Permitting costs, that is costs related to building permits and relevant trade permits (plumbing, electrical, HVAC), are *usually* calculated based on the construction value or estimated cost of the project, and are an additional cost. The estimated cost of the project is based on the cost of the renovation which may include materials and equipment related to architecture, structure, building mechanicals and electricity, professional fees, foundation excavation and backfilling fees, taxes, and in some instances fees for plans and specifications.

³ A full bathroom is defined as having four key fixtures: a toilet, sink, bathtub, and shower or shower-bath combo. Other popular but not necessary features in a full bath include a linen

closet, bidet, makeup station, and/or a double sink. A powder room or half-bath is defined as having only two of the four main bathroom components, typically a toilet and sink.

⁴ Jean, Jimmy, Randall Bartlett and Kari Norman, “Global Housing Supply Success Stories: A How-To for Boosting Home Construction in Canada,” Desjardins Economic Studies, August 22, 2023. https://publications.gc.ca/site/archived.html?url=https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2023/ccdp-chrc/CH1-44-2023-eng.pdf

⁵ Canadian human rights commission, Advocating for change: The housing crisis in Canada, 2023. https://publications.gc.ca/site/archived.html?url=https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2023/ccdp-chrc/CH1-44-2023-eng.pdf

best practices in a selection of Canadian municipalities which could be adopted across the country to increase efficiency and transparency around the permitting process, and identifies areas for improvement. For example, to encourage homeowners to

Simple projects, serious red tape

If Canada is to meet its need for an additional 3.45 million homes, over and above the base level of 2.2 million homes by 2030, it will take innovative solutions and improved processes across all levels of government.⁶ According to CMHC, increasing supply from existing units can play a significant role in addressing the current housing shortage, as CMHC suggests a large portion of seniors will opt for aging in place, rather than putting their current houses on the market.⁷ However, onerous permitting processes across Canada's municipalities must be addressed if governments hope to capitalize on this possible solution.

Renovating a bathroom could be one of several steps a homeowner would need to create a new unit in their existing household. With rising interest rates, and higher costs of materials and labour, construction projects of all sizes in Canada are becoming more and more costly. The added permitting process costs, in time and money, can be a significant pain point, adding lengthy delays (anywhere between 24 hours and 4 months or more) or even thousands of dollars to the overall project cost.

maximize the use of their property, municipalities must review the relevance, application, and administration of existing requirements, simplify, and even automate certain processes, and lower administrative costs and time lost for all.

Out of the 12 municipalities examined, the average combined cost of acquiring all permits required for a simple bathroom renovation across Canada was \$506.25, mainly fuelled by the high permitting costs in Vancouver. The combined cost associated with permitting required for a simple renovation (such as building, plumbing, and electrical permits) ranges from \$180 in Charlottetown to \$2,029 in Vancouver (see Figure 1).

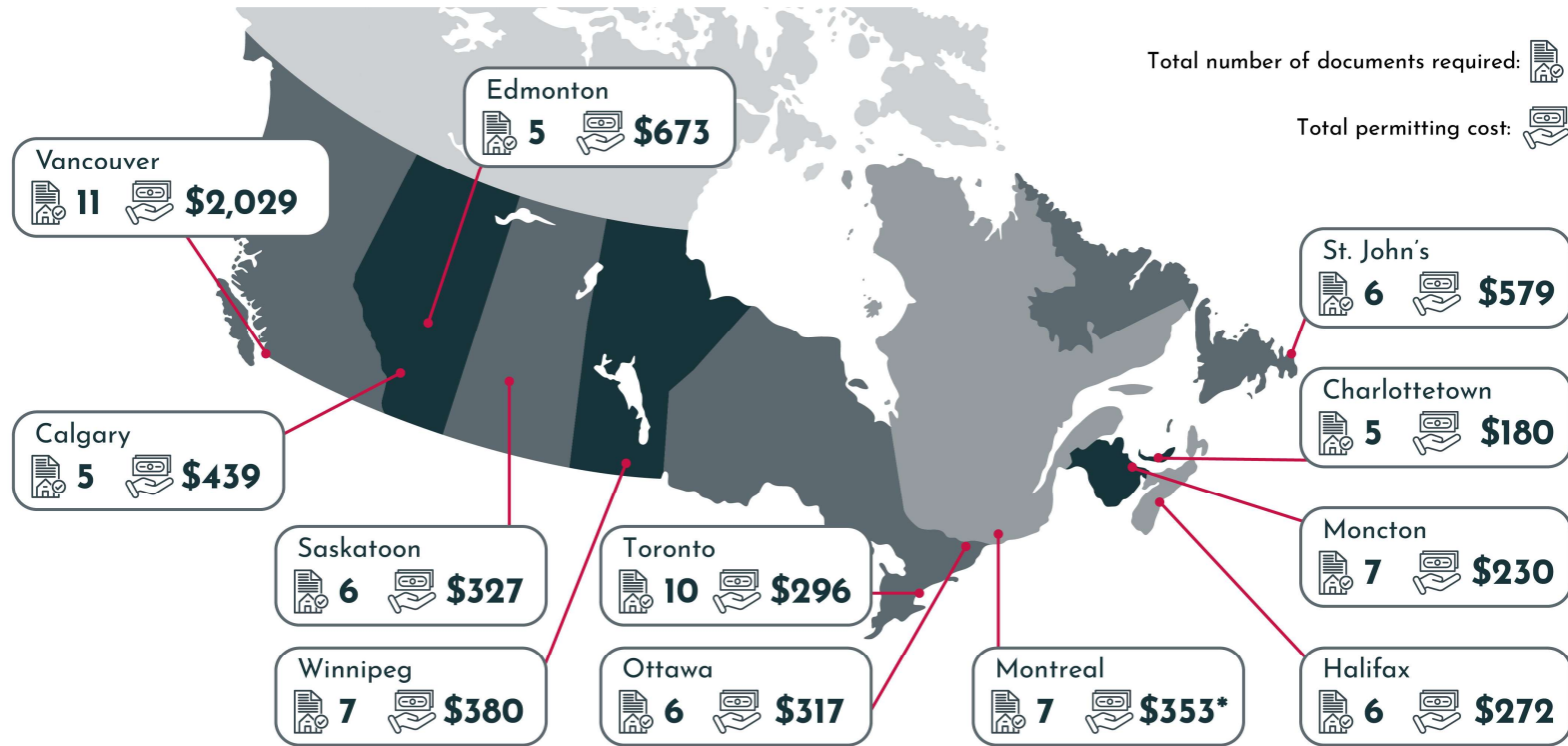
All municipalities examined require documents, which include forms, such as site plans, floor plans, and construction plans, and permits, such as building and trade (plumbing, electrical, and gas) permits, to be submitted for a bathroom renovation, ranging from five in Edmonton, Calgary, and Charlottetown, to eleven in Vancouver. On average, seven documents are required for a \$20,000 bathroom renovation project. These documents can be considerable sources of red tape, with some municipalities requiring forms that necessitate the services of an engineer or other professionals, adding to the overall cost of the application.

⁶ CMHC, "Housing Shortages in Canada: Updating How Much Housing We Need by 2030", <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research>

⁷ CMHC, "Housing Market Insight: Canadian Metropolitan Areas", <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research>

FIGURE 1 - Bathroom renovation document requirements and permitting costs in major cities across Canada

Vancouver and Toronto have the highest permitting costs and document requirements, Charlottetown the lowest



Source: Data was collected from relevant municipal and city government websites. See appendices for more information.

Note: *In Montreal, plumbing and electrical permits are not listed as separate direct costs, thus not included in the overall calculation, as they are typically covered under the contractor's licensing fees. This figure will most likely be higher than presented.

A recent CFIB survey⁸ of small business owners found that more than two in five find it difficult to obtain permits and licences overall. This difficulty is even more pronounced among small businesses in the construction sector, with 53% agreeing that obtaining or renewing permits and/or licences is a major challenge for their business. Generally, an overwhelming majority of businesses (80%) agree that governments of all levels should make it a high priority to review all business permits and licences (i.e., getting rid of unnecessary permits and licences and improving accountability), track and publish the actual time it takes to

process business permits and/or licences to be accountable (80%), as well as make clear and expected timeframes for processing applications for business permits and or licences public (79%).

These results show the need for serious reform at the municipal level to cut unnecessary red tape in their permitting and application process, for homeowners and contractors, to ensure projects of all sizes can be completed as efficiently as possible in terms of time and cost.

Feeding frustration: Municipalities with the largest red tape burden

Expanding existing housing stock through secondary suites can help in getting more affordable units online faster. However, the process to create these units must be financially viable and simple to execute. If the simple task of expanding a bathroom is too difficult as a result of the associated administrative burden, it could make the prospect of undertaking a larger project impractical.

Out of the 12 municipalities studied, the renovation processes in Toronto and Vancouver were the most burdensome in terms of documents (forms and permits) required in an application. For example, for a simple bathroom renovation in Toronto, an applicant would be required to have ten documents before they can even begin renovations. Required documents include forms such as floor plans, an application to construct or demolish, and

even a review by an architect and engineer which could add anywhere from five to twenty percent of the construction cost,⁹ depending in which municipality the renovation takes place, on top of the permitting costs¹⁰ and the \$20,000 budgeted for the renovation. These document requirements do not just add time and possibly lengthy delays to the renovation process, but also significant cost. If tackling small bathroom renovations is already proving to be challenging, one can only envision the time and expenses involved in more extensive projects like adding a secondary suite or putting in a new build. Members have shared with us feedback on similar issues they have experienced when building, renovating, or retrofitting commercial spaces.

In terms of costs, Vancouver was by far the most expensive of all municipalities reviewed. A simple bathroom renovation in

⁸ CFIB, Your Voice - February 2023 survey, February 8-28, 2023, final results, n = 2,656 to 2,670. Question: "Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding business permits and/or licences?" (Select one for each line)

⁹ Home Guide, Architect Costs, <https://homeguide.com/costs/architect-cost>.

¹⁰ Total permitting cost refers to the total cost for a building permit and relevant trade permit for a bathroom renovation according to the case study. In our cost analysis, we have excluded

expenses related to hiring specialized professionals, such as engineers, energy advisers, architects, and similar experts, as well as inspection costs. These excluded costs are considered additional expenditures that should be accounted for separately from the figures presented. These costs may range significantly across Canada as well as within cities, therefore for the sake of consistency across different provinces, we have omitted these expenses from the total costs. See the Methodology in Appendix A for more information.

Vancouver would cost a staggering \$2,029 in permitting on top of the cost of actually performing the renovation as well as the application costs associated with hiring professionals (i.e., architect, engineer, etc.). The added \$2,029 in combined permit expenses in Vancouver would result in a 10% increase on top of the \$20,000 renovation project costs. In comparison, in Toronto the cost associated with permitting is just \$296, or 1.5% of the cost of the project. Vancouver's permitting costs are about 7 times higher than Toronto's.

In a recent CFIB survey of permit and licensing requirements, some small business owners shared feedback on the costs and amount of time lost they faced as a result of permit requirements and processing in the Vancouver and Toronto area (Figure 2). While

there have been some positive announcements made this year in Vancouver (see Appendix B for more information), results are yet to be determined. The city of Toronto has not made any recent announcements regarding this issue, and the most recent Toronto Building Program Review was initiated four years ago in 2019.

While Vancouver and Toronto were the worst offenders in terms of the amount of red tape associated with their permitting process, a handful of smaller cities also have room to improve their permitting and approval process. Edmonton (\$673) and St. John's (\$579) both charged above the national average of \$506.25. Compared to Vancouver and Toronto, the municipalities that require the most documents before work can begin are Moncton, Montreal, and Winnipeg, that all require 7 documents.

FIGURE 2 - Comments on permitting from small business owners

Small business owners' frustrations surrounding permits that have negatively impacted their business

“When we opened 8 years ago, we had to pay \$3,000 for overtime for a City of Vancouver planner to review our building permit application over the weekend. It was four hours of work. Had we not paid this, we were told it would take 3-6 months to review our permit, while we were paying commercial rent the whole time.”

— Personal Services Business Owner, Vancouver, British Columbia

“... they [Fraser Valley Regional District] just don't realize we are in a housing crisis. I want to build a small coach house on my 3 acres at the river and I need to jump through hoop after hoop. It has been nearly 3 years and it's still at a crawl. Costs now will be incurred based on new interest rates, etc., and I could have already had the coach house complete.”

— Natural Resources Business Owner, Chilliwack, British Columbia

“Building and planning permit times are unacceptable in the GTA, causing huge lag on the entire local economy.”

— Professional Services Business Owner, Toronto, Ontario

Source: CFIB, Your Voice - February 2023 survey, February 8-28, 2023, final results, n = 2,656 to 2,670.

Question: “Are there any specific licences and/or permits that your business needs that are negatively impacting your business (e.g., causing frustration, creating uncertainty)? Please let us know which ones they are, how they are affecting your business, and whether you think the problem is specific to businesses in your industry or widespread.”

Feeding frustration part II: Impacts on the small business construction sector

While there are multiple possible solutions to address the housing crisis, it is clear that small businesses have a role to play. The construction contributes approximately 7% to Canada's GDP, with 82% of construction businesses being small and mid-sized enterprises (1 to 499 employees). Notably, these SMEs play a crucial role in employing 85% of the construction workforce.¹¹

Currently, municipal processes are making it harder for these small businesses to get involved. To effectively address housing needs and support small businesses in the construction sector, municipalities must find ways to reduce both time and cost by streamlining operations and finding ways to become more efficient. The time and financial costs associated with excessive administrative burden add to an already overstressed sector. Almost half of small businesses in the construction sector (45%)¹² are below their normal revenue levels and are carrying an average of \$108,928 in pandemic-related debt.¹³ On top of these realities, six in 10 are negatively impacted by current interest rates.¹⁴ By optimizing processes and minimizing financial constraints for these businesses, municipalities can contribute to meeting housing demands while fostering a resilient and sustainable construction landscape.

The administrative burden associated with even the most basic construction permitting and approval processes can place significant additional pressure and costs on small businesses. Unlike their larger counterparts, small businesses do not have many

resources available to weather the administrative storm or navigate the red tape quagmire at City Hall, resulting in a disproportionate impact on small entrepreneurs compared to larger businesses in the industry. The substantial administrative burden associated with the permitting process in some municipalities can also result in unintended consequences. Having unreasonable and excessive requirements for even the simplest projects can create barriers to compliance and possibly drive some to do the work underground. By having permitting requirements that are accessible and straightforward, municipalities can ensure projects are up to code while also being less costly.

Further, a self-employed or small-sized electrician, plumber, or contractor, for example, must face the financial implications imposed on them by municipal processing delays head-on. Delayed approvals result in delayed projects. This often means delayed compensation, as small businesses in the construction sector must wait until their work is complete to get their full payment. Some small businesses may have to turn to personal savings to keep projects going and to keep their business afloat. Many are left having to pay interest on lines of credit or loans, all while dealing with lower revenues. Onerous permitting requirements and lengthy or delayed approval processes come with financial costs. Improving the regulatory environment of Canada's municipalities will not only make it easier to build, but it will also help homeowners and small businesses in the sector meet their full potential and play a key

¹¹ CFIB, The Main Street Quarterly, Sectoral Profile: Construction. https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/hubfs/research/msg/CFIB_MSQ_Q2_2023_profitsect.pdf

¹² CFIB, Your Voice - May 2023, May 4-25, 2023, n = 1,688 to 2,273. Question: "Compared to the normal levels for your business at this time of year, at what levels are the following currently?"

¹³ CFIB, Your Voice - December 2023, December 7-19, 2023, n = 1,746. Question: "Are you in a position to tell us roughly how much additional debt due to the pandemic your business is still holding?" (Please enter approximate amount)

¹⁴ CFIB, Your Voice - September 2023, September 7-21, 2023, n = 2,539. Question: "How have rising interest rates impacted your business so far?" (Select one)

role in meeting the demand for upgrades and new builds in our cities.¹⁵

Promising new developments and leveraging best practices

While the realities associated with the housing shortages are concerning, several municipalities are introducing new and innovative ways to improve their permitting and approval processes, cutting the time and costs placed on building projects. Championing these best practices can help some of the most burdensome municipalities improve their results for businesses and projects of all sizes thereby helping Canada collectively chip away at the millions of housing units needed by 2030.

Best practice #1: Automation and digital practices

Municipalities across the country are actively exploring new and best practices to optimize their permit application processes and enhance municipal services. Some are digitizing processes and introducing new self-service tools, which can significantly reduce the need for in-person queries and human resource involvement. These tools should be accessible around the clock and mobile-friendly, offering applicants the convenience of tracking their application status in real time.

For example, the *City of Richmond* has developed an online business licensing service called “My Business,”¹⁶ that allows for real-time tracking of permit applications, eventually aiming to auto-approve simple permits. This innovative approach enhances transparency by allowing applicants to monitor their applications’ status in real time.

Meanwhile, another BC municipality, *Kelowna*, is working with Microsoft to develop a chatbot that will answer questions, provide information and, eventually, process some planning and development permits. These initiatives are still in their testing phase.

Best practice #2: Ease of access to information on the website and by phone

While new technologies have a lot of promise, municipalities across Canada could also draw and learn from each other’s existing best practices. Many municipalities require building permit applicants to click through from one page to the next and back to get a sense of all the requirements and then try to discern what could apply to them. This can be time consuming and confusing.

¹⁵ Canadian human rights commission, Advocating for change: The housing crisis in Canada, 2023. [https://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee-](https://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee-archived.html?url=https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2023/ccdp-chrc/CH1-44-2023-eng.pdf)

[archived.html?url=https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2023/ccdp-chrc/CH1-44-2023-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2023/ccdp-chrc/CH1-44-2023-eng.pdf)

¹⁶ [Login \(richmond.ca\)](https://richmond.ca/login)

Edmonton has implemented a Residential Permit Guide, which asks preliminary questions to guide users and provides a summary of necessary permits, application guidance, and estimated fees, ensuring a smooth transition into the application process.

Moncton has developed an easy to print, step-by-step check list in a PDF. Clear information and tools can significantly reduce the need for in-person queries and human resource involvement.

As good as a website or portal may be, private individuals and even professionals may have questions regarding permit requirements and costs. Online services and information need to be complemented with the ability to speak to an actual person, whether it be on the phone or in person, in a timely manner. Multiple channels of service delivery are a best practice in terms of client service. While it was found that many municipalities had phone lines, not all were staffed during their posted hours of operation. Municipalities were asked to confirm our understanding of the publicly accessible information on their website and to seek information that was unavailable. At times, when a municipal employee was reached, they were not always sure of the response. So of course, it is not only about offering the service, but also about ensuring that the service is of quality, adds value, and provides reliable information.

In **Ottawa**, and likely the rest of Ontario, one can call the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA), who will issue the permit by telephone immediately.

In **Calgary**, the agent committed to enquire into our question, and then sent us a written email response that same day.

Best practice #3: Service standards and processing times

Service standards¹⁷ or permit processing times were not always easy to find where they did exist, and few municipalities reported on results (i.e., whether the service standards were met). Setting service standards and reporting against them is a way to set expectations, provide transparency, and enable city administrators to monitor workload and progress. Despite the city of Vancouver having the highest document requirements and greatest costs, they offer service standards in terms of the percentage in which they successfully met their target processing times during the last three months for plumbing, gas, and electrical permits.¹⁸ While commendable, they do not offer service standards for building permits (see Appendix B). All municipalities should consider adopting similar reporting practices, potentially in a format that facilitates historical analysis. These best practices provide a roadmap for municipalities looking to modernize their permit application processes and municipal services. By embracing digitization, offering self-service tools, providing clear information and good customer service, and setting service standards and reporting on their compliance, cities can enhance efficiency, accessibility, and transparency, ultimately leading to improved citizen and business satisfaction. These practices are fundamental as municipalities continue to evolve their public services.

¹⁷ Defined as “a public commitment to a measurable level of performance that clients can expect under normal circumstances.” Source: Department of Justice Canada. [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/service.html#:~:text=A%20service%20standard%20is%20a,can%20expect%20under%20normal%](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/service.html#:~:text=A%20service%20standard%20is%20a,can%20expect%20under%20normal%20circumstances.)

¹⁸ <https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/plumbing-and-gas-permits.aspx>

The City of Winnipeg provides bimonthly reports of processing time dating back to 2014, organized and determined depending on the scope of the project. Their reports outline the City’s target time, and the actual values of meeting these targets (see Figure 3).

Edmonton publishes target processing time and actual processing times within the last 3 months for building and trade permits.¹⁹ For building permits, **Halifax** publishes the historical average of the time it takes for approvals and has an open data portal.

FIGURE 3 - Residential permit application processing times (January-February 2023)
City of Winnipeg residential permit application processing times and targets

Residential Permit Type		Description of Work	Initial Complete Review (ICR*) Times in Number of Business Days		City Target Time
			Median	75% Percentile	
Actual values are reported based on the previous two-month time period.					
Residential Permits (new construction, additions, and alterations)					
Residential 1 Day	Accessory Structure permit of any type not requiring a zoning or structural review	N/A	N/A	1	
Residential 5 Day	Accessory Structure permit for in-ground or above-ground swimming pool, or a permit that requires a structural plan and/or zoning review, or DCA-5 Day or Master-5 Day	3	5	5	
Residential 10 Day	Housing permit for new construction, additions, alterations (except above), detached secondary suites, solar panel installations	6	8	10	
Residential 15 Day	Housing permit for change of use and conversions (adding or subtracting dwelling units, residential care homes, day cares, secondary suites, rooming houses)	14	15	15	
Residential 20 Day	Row housing	18	19	20	
* ICR = number of business days required for an initial review of a permit application by all City of Winnipeg departments involved; complete and compliant applications can be issued following the initial review. Applications that are missing information or non-compliant with Codes and By-laws will be placed on hold until the issue(s) are resolved.					
N/A indicates categories where there were no permits or where the permit volumes were too low to be statistically relevant.					

Source: City of Winnipeg, *Residential permit application processing times*. <https://legacy.winnipeg.ca/ppd/permits/PermitApplicationProcessingTimes/Residential.stm>

¹⁹ https://www.edmonton.ca/business_economy/processing-times

Recommendations

Availability of housing, including affordable housing, is an issue. To encourage homeowners to maximize the use of their property, while ensuring public health and safety, municipalities should review the relevance, application, and administration of existing requirements, seek to simplify and even automate certain

Municipalities

- Launch a review of the permitting and approval process, including a review of the relevance and scope of existing requirements, with a view of reducing them.
- Establish, publicly available, service standards for permit processing and publicly report against them monthly, if not weekly or daily.
- Improve the ease of access to information on building permit requirements.
- Digitize the permit application and review processes. Consider following Kelowna's lead and look at the adoption of AI where risks are low.
- Ensure adequate resource allocation to effectively reduce processing times.
- Reduce permitting cost for individuals and businesses.

processes, and lower administrative costs and time lost for all. When considering e-permitting, e-services, or similar measures; processes, requirements, and dedicated resources should be reviewed, so that an arduous process is not simply made electronic without generating any real-time savings.

Federal and/or provincial governments

- Tie some future funding for housing and infrastructure to requirements for low administrative burden.
- Where permit processing service standards are set provincially, ensure reporting requirements are too.
- Champion best practices.

Appendix A

Methodology:

This analysis was primarily conducted as a case study by reviewing information available through municipal and provincial government resources as well as relevant third parties, such as the appropriate electrical, plumbing, or gas authority on the requirements for permitting a bathroom renovation. Data is accurate as of December 8, 2023.

Case study: Converting a powder room (otherwise known as a half-bath or guest bath, which consists of two fixtures, a toilet and a sink) into a full bathroom (consisting of four fixtures at a minimum, namely a toilet, sink, and shower and bath or shower bath).

Project requirements: Taking down a wall (structural change), new plumbing and fixtures (e.g., shower and bath), and some electrical work (e.g., ventilation).

Other notes: Non-historical home from the 1980s. Renovation to be completed within existing square footage.

Construction value: \$20,000

The documents required were taken from the relevant city and municipal websites and verified by speaking to a representative over the phone or by email whenever possible. Data sources,

including websites, emails, and phone numbers, are provided in the appendix.

Total number of documents: This is calculated as the total number of forms and permits required for a bathroom renovation according to the case study. These documents include permits (e.g., building permits, trade permits for plumbing, gas, electrical) and forms (e.g., schedules, architectural drawing, energy reports). These do not include any inspection forms required throughout the various inspection stages.

Total permitting costs: This is calculated as the total cost for a building permit and relevant trade permit for a bathroom renovation according to the case study. We have excluded from the cost analysis expenses related to hiring specialized professionals, such as engineers, energy advisers, architects, and similar experts, as well as inspection costs. These excluded costs are considered additional expenditures and should be accounted for separately from the figures presented. They may range significantly across Canada as well as within cities. Therefore, for the sake of consistency across different provinces, we have omitted these expenses from the total costs.

Appendix B

Jurisdictional Scan

Vancouver

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Building application form ²⁰		
	Survey plan ²¹		
	Site plan		
	Renovation drawings ²²		
	Renovation Energy Upgrade Proposal ²³		
	Owner's Undertaking (Schedule E-1 ²⁴)		
	Structural engineer schedule (Schedule B) ²⁵		
	Technical Data Summary ²⁶		
Permits	Building permit ²⁷	\$362.00 ²⁸	N/A ²⁹
	Plumbing permit	\$353.00 ³⁰	5 business days for simple projects, and 25 business days for other plumbing permits requiring plan review ³¹
	Electrical permit	\$1,314.00 ³²	5 business days ³³
Total number of documents and permitting costs	11	\$2,029.00	

²⁰ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/dev-build-app-form.pdf>

²¹ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/addition-reno-rs-zones.pdf>

²² Including floor plans, elevations, and cross sections: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/addition-reno-rs-zones.pdf>

²³ Prepared by an Energy Adviser. Required for Building Permits for all proposals where the estimated cost of work is \$20,000 or greater. <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/renovation-energy-upgrade-proposal-form.xlsm>

²⁴ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/schedule-e-1-owners-undertaking-letter-building-by-law-2019.pdf>

²⁵ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/schedule-b-assurance-professional-design-field-review-building-by-law-2019.pdf>

²⁶ (Zoning analysis) - Provide project statistics to show compliance with the applicable District schedule and/or guidelines.

²⁷ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/dev-build-app-form.pdf>

²⁸ Approximation received by the City of Vancouver email (Case reference 201000889690).

²⁹ Not readily available on the website. It is only available through open data. See: <https://opendata.vancouver.ca/pages/home/>

³⁰ Fees dependent upon installation of fixtures alteration of plumbing pipes - between \$240 (\$75.60 for each additional) and \$353. [2023 Schedule of fees for development and building related permits \(vancouver.ca\)](#)

³¹ [Plumbing and gas permits | City of Vancouver](#)

³² \$946 + an additional \$36.80 for every \$1,000 of work above \$10,000. p. 19 <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-development-building-permit-fees.pdf>

³³ [Electrical permit | City of Vancouver](#)

conditions, in addition to the 89 removed earlier this year, to further simplify the application process and reduce staff's initial review time.⁴⁰ These are great initiatives that must be backed by publicly available service standards and recourse in cases where they are not met.

Government source for data verification:

Phone number, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. 604-873-7000, online chat and email: <https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/contact-development-buildings-services-centre.aspx>

⁴⁰ <https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/permitting-improvement-program.aspx#:~:text=3%2D3%2D1%20Permit%20Approval%20Framework&text=3%20weeks%20to%20approve%20single,rise%20or%20large%2Dscale%20project.>

Edmonton

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms ⁴¹	Floor plan ⁴²		
	Structural and engineering documents ⁴³		
Permits	Building permit ⁴⁴	\$394.20 ⁴⁵	Simple projects - 25 days; Regular projects - 40 days ⁴⁶
	Plumbing permit ⁴⁷	\$116.50 ⁴⁸	3 days ⁴⁹
	Electrical permit ⁵⁰	\$161.96 ⁵¹	3 days ⁵²
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	5	\$672.66	

Service standards publicly available: Yes, for all permits.

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Yes, for all permits.⁵³

⁴¹ (Click on access the guide) https://www.edmonton.ca/residential_neighbourhoods/renovations-basement-development

⁴² [Sample Basement Floor Plan \(edmonton.ca\)](#)

⁴³ Engineering stamped drawings are required if you are making changes to the structure of the house such as: beams, posts supporting beams, load-bearing walls, floors, wall opening enlargement, or new opening in foundation walls.

⁴⁴ [Home Renovations and Basements | City of Edmonton](#) Building permit fee for construction value between \$10,001-\$50,000.

⁴⁵ \$379.60 (Building permit) + \$14.60 (Building Safety Codes)

⁴⁶ https://www.edmonton.ca/business_economy/processing-times Processing times are actual processing times as of April-June 2023.

⁴⁷ [2023 Building and Trade Permit Fee Schedule \(edmonton.ca\)](#) Over the phone: she quoted me \$119.6 - online it says \$116.5.

⁴⁸ \$112.00 (Plumbing permit) + \$4.50 (Plumbing safety code)

⁴⁹ https://www.edmonton.ca/business_economy/processing-times Plumbing and Gas permits: 95% within target, 2-day average.

⁵⁰ [Home Renovations and Basements | City of Edmonton](#) Electrical permit fee for construction value between \$0-\$24,000.

⁵¹ \$156.00 to install new wiring + \$5.96 (Electrical Safety codes)

⁵² https://www.edmonton.ca/business_economy/processing-times 94% within target, 1-day average.

⁵³ The city aims to meet the target processing times 75% of the time or more. For April-June 2023, 89% of permits for simple projects were issued within the target time. It is 78% for regular projects. [Development and Construction Application Processing Times | City of Edmonton](#)

Notes on red tape: It is not too difficult to reach the City of Edmonton's support staff by phone, and their website is very user-friendly. However, while they have publicly available target and actual processing times by permit type, they lack established standards or avenues for public or citizen redress when processing times are not adhered to.

Best practices and other notable initiatives: Edmonton has implemented a commendable best practice in simplifying the residential permit process. By offering a user-friendly platform and the Residential Permit Guide,⁵⁴ they have made it easy for individuals to determine the necessary permits and estimate fees before starting their application. This comprehensive yet user-friendly guide, requiring just a few questions and minimal navigation (about 10 clicks), streamlines the process. It provides a tailored summary for each project, outlining specific design and documentation requirements, along with an estimate of the total project cost and required permits. Furthermore, Edmonton's approach encourages efficiency and user-friendliness. Should you decide to proceed with your project, you can seamlessly transition to the permit application stage by creating an account. This best practice ensures a smooth and convenient experience from start to finish, setting an excellent example for others to follow.

Government source for data verification:

Phone number: In Edmonton - 311, Outside Edmonton - 780-442-5311.

⁵⁴ https://selfserve.edmonton.ca/Default.aspx?PossePresentation=SelfServeWizard&PosseObjectDef=s_Users

Calgary

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Floor plans ⁵⁵		
	Home improvement Service Application form ⁵⁶		
Permits	Building permit ⁵⁷	\$205.92 ⁵⁸	Within 7 days for basic improvements. Within 42 days for complex improvements
	Plumbing permit ⁵⁹	\$116.50	Within 24 hours after application
	Electrical permit	\$116.50	N/A
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	5	\$438.92	

Service standards publicly available: Yes, for building permits. However, information for building permit processing times is only available through their open data portal and is not readily available on their website. For plumbing permits, information was available by phone but unavailable through the website. Service standards were not available for electrical permits.

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Not available.

Notes on red tape: Securing plumbing and electrical permits in Calgary can be a cumbersome experience due to the decentralized nature of the process. Regrettably, there is no online resource for tracking the processing times of these permits. While they claim to issue plumbing permits within 24 hours over the phone, the lack of publicly accessible service standards and a clear procedure for addressing delays can make this process frustrating and uncertain. Nonetheless, reaching municipal officials by phone was relatively easy and they even sent an email with all the necessary information shortly after the call. Furthermore, while service standards are not available for building and trade permits,

⁵⁵ Also include as one file in the digital application: Electrical plans (Electrical layout), Mechanical plans (Mechanical layout), Plumbing and gas plans (Plumbing and gas layout), Structural plans (Wall details, foundation plans, floor and roof framing layouts).

⁵⁶ <http://www.calgary.ca/PDA/pd/Documents/Permit-checklists/Home%20Improvement%20Service%20Application%20Form.pdf>; Can also apply online.

⁵⁷ <https://calgary.ca/content/dam/www/pda/pd/documents/permit-checklists/home-renovation-and-basement-permit-checklist.pdf>

⁵⁸ <https://www.calgary.ca/content/dam/www/pda/pd/documents/fees/planning-applications-fee-schedule.pdf>; <https://www.calgary.ca/development/home-building/basements.html> - fixed price, does not increase based on renovation costs.

⁵⁹ These fees are for Homeowner permits - Contractor trade permit fees will vary.

Calgary offers processing times and performance targets on their website for development, building safety, and business licensing approvals as well as inspection bookings.⁶⁰

Best practices and other notable initiatives: Calgary offers a unique advantage in its building permit system, as it features a fixed fee structure that remains constant regardless of the scale or cost of your renovation or construction project. This stability can be an asset for housing development initiatives within the city. Additionally, Calgary provides a user-friendly Estimate trade permit fees calculator⁶¹ empowering the public to easily estimate the total fees involved in projects such as bathroom renovations. Calgary also has an online system (VISTA) to track the progress of an application and a live chat function.

Government source for data verification: Planning Services Centre 403-268-5311 (8 a.m.-4:15 p.m.), Trade permit centre: 403-268-1488.

⁶⁰ <https://www.calgary.ca/for-business/licences/timelines.html>

⁶¹ [Estimate trade permit fees calculator](#)

Saskatoon

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Floor plan ⁶²		
	Permit application		
	Construction drawings for alterations to structural elements ⁶³		
Permits	Building permit ⁶⁴	\$162 ⁶⁵	5 days ⁶⁶
	Plumbing permit	\$130 ⁶⁷	N/A
	Electrical permit ⁶⁸	\$35 ⁶⁹	N/A
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	6	\$327.00	

Service standards publicly available: Yes, for building permits, not for plumbing and electrical permits.

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Yes, for building permits, not for plumbing and electrical permits.

Notes on red tape: In Saskatoon, a centralized system for applying for and obtaining all necessary permits and associated information is notably absent. When it comes to securing electrical and plumbing permits, applicants must independently contact the relevant utility companies. Additionally, there is no publicly available information regarding processing times for these permits.

Best practices and other notable initiatives: Saskatoon offers an online permitting system (saskatoon.ca/ePermitting) that aims to simplify the application process. They assert that “ePermitting allows you to monitor all permit and inspection activities from the initial application to

⁶² Includes floor plans, construction information (the checklist) and construction drawings [alterations to dwellings \(saskatoon.ca\)](https://saskatoon.ca/alterations_to_dwelling)

⁶³ This includes beams, columns, floor joists, bearing walls.

⁶⁴ [Building Permits | Saskatoon.ca](https://saskatoon.ca/building-permits)

⁶⁵ Minimum fee. [Building Permit Fees | Saskatoon.ca](https://saskatoon.ca/building-permit-fees)

⁶⁶ <https://www.saskatoon.ca/services-residents/homebuilding-renovations-improvements/getting-started/building-permit-timelines>

⁶⁷ [Plumbing | Saskatoon.ca](https://www.saskatoon.ca/plumbing); The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan is responsible for plumbing inspections and permits. There are four different fee ranges based on the number of connected fixtures: 0-6 fixtures - \$130; 7-16 Fixtures - \$185; 17-29 Fixtures - \$350; 30+ Fixtures - \$575

⁶⁸ Must call individual utility company for permit and inspection information. Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan is responsible for electrical permits. <https://www.tsask.ca/electrical/permits>

⁶⁹ https://www.tsask.ca/public/FeeSchedule/Electrical/Electrical_Fee_Schedule_2023.pdf; Up to \$125

completion, renewal, or expiration.”⁷⁰ However, the website’s user-friendliness is a point of concern, as it may require a precise understanding of the necessary permits and their corresponding codes to navigate effectively.

Government source for data verification: Phone number: 306-975-2645.

⁷⁰ <https://www.saskatoon.ca/services-residents/homebuilding-renovations-improvements/getting-started/building-permits>

Winnipeg

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms ⁷¹	Alterations - single/two-family dwelling building permit application form ⁷²		
	Site plan ⁷³		
	Building plans ⁷⁴		
	Professional designer's certificate for housing ⁷⁵		
Permits	Building permit ⁷⁶	\$174	10 days
	Plumbing permit ⁷⁷	\$88 ⁷⁸	N/A
	Electrical permit ⁷⁹	\$88 ⁸⁰	N/A
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>\$380</i>	

Service standards publicly available: Yes, for building permits, not for plumbing and electrical permits.⁸¹

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Yes, for building permits, not for plumbing and electrical permits.⁸²

Notes on red tape: The city does not have a centralized information centre for permits. Citizens must reach out to different departments to obtain information about each permit: one person for the building permit, another for the business permit. There should be a centralized number where someone could give information on all housing-related permits.

⁷¹ We did not include application forms, such as the housing electrical permit application form, the homeowner electrical permit declaration, and the plumbing permit application form. [Electrical installations - Planning, Property & Development Department - City of Winnipeg](#)

⁷² [Home renovations - Planning, Property & Development Department - City of Winnipeg](#)

⁷³ *ibid*

⁷⁴ *ibid*

⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁷⁶ [Planning-Development-and-Building-Fees-and-Charges.pdf \(winnipeg.ca\)](#)

⁷⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸ Minimum fee

⁷⁹ [Planning-Development-and-Building-Fees-and-Charges.pdf \(winnipeg.ca\)](#)

⁸⁰ Minimum fee

⁸¹ [Residential permit application processing times - Planning, Property and Development - City of Winnipeg](#)

⁸² *ibid*

Best practices and notable initiatives: The City of Winnipeg provides archives of processing time every two months, since 2014. It differentiates the time depending on the scope of the project. It gives the city target time and median and 75th percentile of the actual value. Target and actual times are generally similar. It should be noted that the processing time is notably faster, compared to other cities.

Government source for data verification: Phone number: 204-986-5140.

Toronto

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Floor plans ⁸³		
	Sections ⁸⁴		
	Construction details & notes ⁸⁵		
	Application to construct or demolish form ⁸⁶		
	Designer Information Form ⁸⁷		
Permits	Commitment to general review by architect and engineer ⁸⁸		
	Building permit ⁸⁹	\$198.59 ⁹⁰	5 days to check the documents, then 4 to 6 weeks to issue the permit ⁹¹
	Plumbing permit ⁹²	\$0 ⁹³	N/A
	Related mechanical (HVAC) permit ⁹⁴	\$0 ⁹⁵	N/A
	Electrical permit ⁹⁶	\$97 ⁹⁷	Within 24 hours
Total number of documents and permitting costs	10	\$295.59	

⁸³ [Interior Alterations - City of Toronto](#)

⁸⁴ *ibid*

⁸⁵ *ibid*

⁸⁶ *ibid*

⁸⁷ *ibid*

⁸⁸ *ibid*

⁸⁹ [Building Permit Fees - City of Toronto](#)

⁹⁰ Minimum fee

⁹¹ The Ontario Building Code requires that a municipality review a complete permit application within a certain timeframe where the application meets the criteria set out in the Code, it's 10 days for a house. In October 2023, the processing time for the city to review and verify the documents is 5 days. If everything is complete, the customer pays, and the city takes between 4 and 6 weeks to issue a permit.

⁹² Plumbing data sheet [Interior Alterations - City of Toronto](#)

⁹³ There is no additional fee for the plumbing details if it is submitted with a building permit.

⁹⁴ Mechanical System Layout, Mechanical Details [Related Mechanical \(HVAC\) Permit - City of Toronto](#)

⁹⁵ There is no additional fee for the HVAC permit if it is submitted with a building permit.

⁹⁶ [2023-Fees-Residential-at-a-glance.pdf \(esasafe.com\)](#)

⁹⁷ Minimum fees, fees vary according to the size of the project. Electrical permits are handled by the Electricity Safety Authority. These are the residential fees for alterations with service work.

Service standards publicly available: For Toronto and Ottawa, the Building Code requires that a municipality review a complete permit application within a certain timeframe where the application meets the criteria set out in the Code. Once the city confirms the presence of all required documents, the issuance of the permit is at the discretion of the municipality, without a specified timeframe. Data is not available for plumbing and HVAC permits. Electrical permits were confirmed over the phone but not available on their website.

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Not available for plumbing, HVAC and electrical permits.

Notes on red tape: A citizen or business has to deal with several entities when conducting a bathroom renovation within Toronto. The City of Toronto handles building, plumbing, and HVAC permits, while the Electrical Safety Agency (ESA) issues electrical permits in Ontario. This adds a layer of complexity to the process. Furthermore, the processing time for building permits is rather long (4 to 6 weeks).

Best practices and notable initiatives: One great cost-saving advantage is that plumbing and HVAC permit fees are included in the building permit. Furthermore, the Ontario Building Code requires that a municipality review a complete permit application within a certain timeframe, provided the application meets the criteria set out in the Code. Regarding the electrical permit, if you hire a professional to carry out the work, he or she will apply to the ESA for the permit, thus reducing the workload for private individuals. If you decide to do the work yourself, simply call the ESA, who will issue the permit by telephone immediately.

Government source for data verification: Phone number: 416-397-5330.

Ottawa

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Building application form ⁹⁸		
	Building plan ⁹⁹		
	Property survey or site plan ¹⁰⁰		
	Septic plan (where applicable) ¹⁰¹		
Permits	Building permit ¹⁰²	\$220 ¹⁰³	N/A
	Electrical permit ¹⁰⁴	\$97 ¹⁰⁵	Within 24 hours
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>\$317</i>	

Service standards publicly available: For Toronto and Ottawa, the Building Code requires that a municipality review a complete permit application within a specified timeframe¹⁰⁶ where the application meets the criteria set out in the Code. Once the city confirms the presence of all required documents, the issuance of the permit is at the discretion of the municipality, without a specified timeframe. Electrical permits were confirmed over the phone but not available on their website.

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Not available.

Notes on red tape: A customer has to deal with several entities. The City of Ottawa handles building permits, which includes construction works, plumbing, and HVAC, while the Electrical Safety Agency (ESA) issues electrical permits in Ontario. In calling the City of Ottawa's Building Code Service phone number, we were unable to reach anyone. In communicating with the Building Code Services team via email, we

⁹⁸ [Building permit approval process | City of Ottawa; https://files.ontario.ca/mmah_1/mmah-building-development-application-for-a-permit-to-construct-or-demolish-2014-en-2021-11-01.pdf](https://files.ontario.ca/mmah_1/mmah-building-development-application-for-a-permit-to-construct-or-demolish-2014-en-2021-11-01.pdf)

⁹⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

¹⁰¹ *ibid*

¹⁰² [Forms, applications and fees | City of Ottawa](#)

¹⁰³ \$11 per \$1,000 of construction value. The building permit fee includes plumbing work.

¹⁰⁴ [2023-Fees-Residential-at-a-glance.pdf \(esasafe.com\)](#)

¹⁰⁵ Minimum fees, fees vary according to the size of the project. Electrical permits are handled by the Electricity Safety Authority.

¹⁰⁶ Targets for the first review of a complete submission are as follows: Small Homeowner project: 5 business days Council approved timeline (i.e., Deck/Porch/Shed/Garage); House: 10 business days (i.e., detached, semi-detached, row house). For more information, see: <https://ottawa.ca/en/planning-development-and-construction/building-and-renovating/building-permit-approval-process#section-a94e39b5-7f1f-4e7e-b0a0-90aeb004da91>

received a response within 24 hours. Furthermore, there are no service standards relating to processing times available online for building permits.

Best practices and notable initiatives: The Ontario Building Code requires that a municipality review a complete permit application within a specified timeframe when the application meets the criteria set out in the Code. Regarding the electrical permit, if you hire a professional to carry out the work, they will apply to the ESA for the permit, thus reducing the workload for private individuals. If you decide to do the work yourself, simply call the ESA, who will issue the permit by telephone immediately.

Government source for data verification: Phone number: 866-261-9799 then press 9 to dial this number: 29312.

Montreal

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Certificate of location ¹⁰⁷		
	Building specification sheet ¹⁰⁸		
	Professional-quality scale plans that show the current situation as well as projected work ¹⁰⁹		
	Bid or cost estimate for the work ¹¹⁰		
	Structure plans signed and sealed by an engineer ¹¹¹		
	Plans, illustrations, and/or cuts that show the projected development ¹¹²		
Permits	Renovation permit ¹¹³	\$353 ¹¹⁴	Yes - The processing times vary by borough.
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	7	\$353	

Service standards publicly available: Yes, for renovation permits, processing times vary by borough, not available for all other permit types.

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Not available.

Notes on red tape: A citizen cannot do the work by themselves and apply for a plumbing or electrical permit unless one is a licensed contractor from the Régie du Bâtiment du Québec (RBQ). The boroughs are responsible for the renovation permit. This has a significant impact on our cost analysis. Plumbing and electrical permits are not listed as separate direct costs in Montreal, thus they are not included in the

¹⁰⁷ [Renovate the interior of a building | Ville de Montréal \(montreal.ca\)](#)

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹¹ *ibid*

¹¹² *ibid*

¹¹³ [The cost of a renovation permit | Ville de Montréal \(montreal.ca\)](#)

¹¹⁴ Minimum fee is \$157, plus \$9.80 per \$1,000.

overall calculation, as they are typically covered under the contractor's licensing fees. Greater transparency with permitting costs would be desirable.

Best practices and notable initiatives: The City of Montreal is very accessible and will provide all information that is asked whether it is over the phone or by email.

Government source for data verification: City of Montreal phone number: 514-872-0311; RBQ phone number: 800-361-0761.

Moncton

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Detailed scope of work		
	A complete set of construction drawings ¹¹⁵		
	Foundation plans		
	Floor plan		
Permits	Building permit ¹¹⁶	\$160 ¹¹⁷	5 days ¹¹⁸
	Plumbing permit ¹¹⁹	\$70 ¹²⁰	1 day
	Wiring permit ¹²¹	\$0	2 business days ¹²²
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>\$230</i>	

Service standards publicly available: Yes, for all permit types.

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Not available.

Notes on red tape: The application process for New Brunswick power is more red tape intensive and would most likely require a professional to fill out the application.

Best practices and notable initiatives: The website is very user-friendly and permit information is easily accessible. All the necessary resources like forms, fees, or site plan examples are located on the same webpage. The city also provides a step-by-step checklist in a PDF

¹¹⁵ These drawings must be legible and drawn to scale with detailed notes and dimensions. (Elevation, Relevant cross section, window sizes) [9 - Checklist - Addition and-or Renovation - Single, Two-Unit or Semi-Detached Dwelling \(moncton.ca\)](#)

¹¹⁶ [Building Permits | City of Moncton](#) The building, wiring, and plumbing inspections are included in the permit fee.

¹¹⁷ \$8 per \$1,000 of construction value of the work (minimum \$25) [Building Permits | City of Moncton](#)

¹¹⁸ No public timeline but you can track your application's process. Following a call with the city (these are the processing times that were given: 24 hours for a plumbing permit; 5-day review for a building permit).

¹¹⁹ Signed by a licensed plumber. https://www5.moncton.ca/docs/bi/9E_Additions_and_Renovations_to_Single_Unit_Two_Unit_and_Semi-Detached_Dwellings.pdf

¹²⁰ \$50 + (# of new fixtures * 20) (1 new fixture for adding a shower) [Building Permits | City of Moncton](#)

¹²¹ Only required for electrical construction involving more than (10) outlets or five (5) kw of load.

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.1035.Electrical_Wiring_Permits.html#serviceDescription

¹²² Can only schedule inspections via phone or email - permit has to go through NB power.

format which can limit submission of incomplete permit applications. Moncton also enhances transparency in the application process through its application tracking feature.

Government source for data verification: Phone Number: 506-856-4375.

Halifax

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Sample site plan		
	Building plan		
	Construction plan ¹²³		
Permits	Building permit ¹²⁴	\$31.25	17 days historical three-month average/28-day historical rolling year average ¹²⁵
	Plumbing permit ¹²⁶	\$25	N/A
	Wiring (Electrical) permit ¹²⁷	\$216 ¹²⁸	N/A
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	6	\$272.25	

Service standards publicly available: Yes, for building permits, not available for plumbing or wiring permit.¹²⁹

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Not available.

Notes on red tape: There have been serious delays with Nova Scotia Power. The Atlantic Team has been advocating for the improvement of their permitting and inspection system. The municipality does not provide service standards, making it impossible to gauge Halifax’s performance in delivering these permits.

Best practices and notable initiatives: For building permits, the municipality publishes historical average (3-month average and rolling year) of the time it takes for approvals and has an open data portal.¹³⁰

Government source for data verification: Phone Number: 902-490-5650.

¹²³ Includes samples cross section, floor plan, sample elevation drawing. <https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/building-development-permits/house-home/home-improvement-permits#homereno>
¹²⁴ Building permit fee is \$6.88 per \$1,000 of the estimated value of construction with a minimum fee of \$31.25. <https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/building-development-permits/permit-fees>
¹²⁵ <https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/building-development-permits/permit-volume-processing-times>
¹²⁶ For renovation type work, including structural alterations and repairs. <https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/building-development-permits/permit-fees#PF>
¹²⁷ Wiring permit (for simple electrical work) - based on the Installed value (see fee schedule on the last page). Estimating \$0 to \$2,000 amount of work: \$69. https://www.nspower.ca/docs/default-source/pdf-to-upload/schedule-of-fees-201436864d8b6a704fd8b1752b5e69e8fcc7.pdf?sfvrsn=15f5aef7_0
¹²⁸ \$69 (Wiring permit) + \$115 (Plans examination) + \$32 (Letter of acceptance)
¹²⁹ Wiring permits facing extensive delays <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/permit-system-for-nova-scotia-power-creating-long-waits-1.6871790>
¹³⁰ <https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/building-development-permits/permit-volume-processing-times>

Charlottetown

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Floor plans ¹³¹		
	Project description		
Permits	Building permit ¹³²	\$110	N/A
	Plumbing permit ¹³³	\$50	"permit will be issued when payment is successfully processed"
	Electrical permit ¹³⁴	\$20	N/A
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>\$180</i>	

Service standards publicly available: Not available (except for plumbing permits, which will be issued upon successful payment processing).

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Not available.

Notes on red tape: The City of Charlottetown includes plumbing and building inspections costs in the permit costs. Plumbing permits are handled by the Province of Prince Edward Island, introducing another stakeholder to contact when trying to renovate a bathroom.

Best practices and notable initiatives: Navigation of the website is relatively straightforward, with most application information available in PDF format. However, the fee schedule and the applications themselves are located on a different webpage.

Government source for data verification: Phone Number: 902-629-4158.

¹³¹ Showing lay-out of all floor levels, indicating all work being done. [DownloadFileByUrl.aspx \(charlottetown.ca\)](#)

¹³² \$5.50 per \$1,000 work. [https://cdnsm5-hosted.civicle.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_10500298/File/Resident%20Services/Permits%20&%20Applications/Permit%20Fee%20Schedule/Schedule%20of%20Fees%20\(amended%2024%20July%202023\).pdf](https://cdnsm5-hosted.civicle.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_10500298/File/Resident%20Services/Permits%20&%20Applications/Permit%20Fee%20Schedule/Schedule%20of%20Fees%20(amended%2024%20July%202023).pdf)

¹³³ \$50 (after three fixtures, the applicant is charged an extra \$20). [Request a Plumbing Permit | Government of Prince Edward Island](#)

¹³⁴ \$1.50 per outlet, minimum fee \$20. Minimum used. \$40 per each half hour for plan review and inspection. One half hour used. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/electrical_schedule_of_fees_booklet.pdf

St. John's

Indicator	Form/Permit required	Permitting cost	Permit processing time
Forms	Structural details and sections		
	Survey plan		
	Floor layout ¹³⁵		
Permits	Building permit ¹³⁶	\$180	Only timeline provided is for small repairs (2-5 business days). As this would be considered a larger project than repairs, it would be at least 5+ days.
	Plumbing permit ¹³⁷	\$126.72	N/A
	Electrical permit ¹³⁸	\$273	N/A
<i>Total number of documents and permitting costs</i>	6	\$579.32	

Service standards publicly available: Yes, for building permits; not available for plumbing and electrical permits.

Service standards met or publicly reported against: Not available.

Notes on red tape: The city lacks established service standards. While they mention specific renovation stages, this information is only accessible “on the back of the permit,” and thus, it is only available once the building permit is processed, making it challenging to plan and anticipate.

Best practices and notable initiatives: The website is user-friendly, with all necessary information, including applications, fees, and application requirements, conveniently located on a single webpage. When applying for plumbing and electrical permits, one only needs an

¹³⁵ <https://www.stjohns.ca/en/building-development/renovating-or-extending-a-house.aspx>

¹³⁶ For projects with a value under \$100,000, applicants pay \$9 per \$1,000 (\$50 minimum). <https://www.stjohns.ca/en/building-development/permit-fees-and-rates.aspx#Building-and-Demolition-Permits>

¹³⁷ Applicants must pay \$42.24 for a renovation permit plus \$18.48 per new fixture. \$66 water turn off may apply. The city will only provide a permit to a licensed plumber; however, the homeowner must make sure a permit is in place and that the work is completed by a licensed plumber. <https://www.stjohns.ca/en/building-development/permit-fees-and-rates.aspx#Plumbing-Permits>

¹³⁸ Applied for by the plumber. For renovation - \$72.60 + 1% of estimated cost. A permit will only be provided to a licensed electrician; however, the homeowner is responsible for ensuring a permit is in place and there is a licensed electrician to do the work. <https://www.stjohns.ca/en/building-development/permit-fees-and-rates.aspx#Electrical-Permits> Requires an inspection: <https://www.stjohns.ca/en/building-development/plumbing-permits-and-inspections.aspx>

application, no additional documents are required. This streamlined process allows renovation applicants to quickly access the information they need.

Government source for data verification: Phone Number: 709-576-8565.

About CFIB

CFIB is a non-partisan organization exclusively representing the interests of 97,000 small and medium-sized businesses in Canada. CFIB's research capacity is second-to-none because it is able to gather timely and concrete information from members about business issues that affect their day-to-day operation and bottom line. In this capacity, CFIB is an excellent source of up-to-date information for governments to consider when developing policies impacting Canada's small business community.

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