

Municipal Benchmarking Study

EDMONTON



OVERALL RANKING

Edmonton has a combined ranking of first across the three categories of approval timelines, government charges, and planning features. Helping Edmonton achieve this rank was receiving the best score of all 21 municipalities in planning features.

	Rank	Planning Features (1=best)	Approvals Timelines (1=best)	Government Charges (1=lowest)	Score (Avg. Rank)
1	Edmonton	1	6	6	4.5
2	Charlottetown	19	1	1	6.4
3	Calgary	6	5	10	6.8
4	London	3	8	9	6.8
5	Regina	13	3	7	7.2
6	Winnipeg	15	4	5	7.6
7	Saskatoon	12	2	11	7.7
8	Halifax	5	16	4	9.1
9	St. John's	20	7	3	9.7
10	Ottawa	10	9	12	10.2
11	Moncton	21	10	2	10.9
12	Vancouver	8	10	17	11.5
13	Surrey	9	11	15	11.6
14	Oakville	4	13	18	11.8
15	Hamilton	7	18	13	13.2
16	Brampton	11	12	19	13.8
17	Burnaby	16	17	8	14.0
18	Toronto	2	20	21	14.9
19	Pickering	17	14	16	15.5
20	BWG	18	15	14	15.6
21	Markham	14	19	20	17.8

The study assessed municipalities on features, approvals and government charges, drawing out best practices. All cities can learn from each others' experiences, continually improving policies and operations to increase housing supply and affordability.



Population

change in the last decade



House Prices

change from 2006-2021

+149%



National Average

+75%



Edmonton

RANKINGS

Each participating municipality has been assigned a score that combines their performance on planning features, approvals timelines and government charges. This ranking provides a snapshot to show which municipal governments are leading in which of the three areas at the moment, as well as an overall ranking. This ranking does not assess anything beyond what was analyzed and is not reflective necessarily of the engagement and cooperation between industry and local governments. Whether at the top or the bottom of the list, each city can learn from best practices of others and continue to improve.

Planning Features

Each municipality is scored on whether they have features that can support an efficient planning approvals system, and increase transparency for developers, the public, or other interested parties. They were scored based on six overall themes.



Approvals Timelines

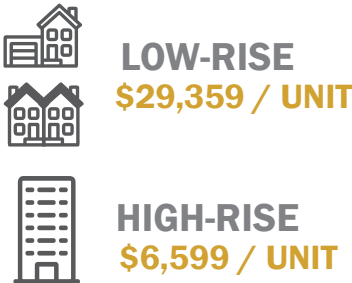


We estimate typical approval timelines for development applications – from complete application to planning approval. The nature of the ‘planning approval’ can take many forms.

Delays in approvals impact housing affordability. Months of delays add tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of a home.

Municipal Charges

The report provides a high-level overview of government charges levied by municipal governments and attempts to quantify the costs these charges and fees generate for developers, home builders, and ultimately, home buyers. To model and estimate the charges and fees imposed by the municipalities two development scenarios were analyzed.



SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

To achieve a first-place ranking, Edmonton has several elements working well, and a few others requiring improvement.

WORKING WELL



Many Beneficial Features

Edmonton has the greatest number of identified features deemed as beneficial to encouraging housing supply. This includes the ability to appeal land use decisions, mandated timelines for appeal decisions to be rendered and others.



Extensive Amount of Information

There are several guides, checklists and terms of references available to help provide builders in their application submissions with the City. The guides provide an extensive amount of information, along with easy-to-understand charts and graphs.



Online Services

The City of Edmonton's online portal services have advanced functionality – it is possible to apply for pre-application meetings for rezoning, subdivision and development permits. There are also online services for submitting various actual planning applications, in addition to building permits.



Planning Process

The City's website clearly lays out the planning process and planning applications by neighbourhood and ward, thereby encouraging public engagement.



Population Growth

The City saw robust population growth, with percentage growth in each of the past Census periods exceeding the study-wide averages. Of as the 2021 Census, the City now exceeds the milestone population of 1,000,000 people.



Distributed Sources of Population Growth

Edmonton was one of only a few jurisdictions studied (others being Ottawa, Halifax, Moncton) that saw positive population growth from all four international and domestic sources of net in-migration – international immigration, non-permanent residents, Intraprovincial migration (movement within Alberta) and interprovincial migration (movement within Canada).

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT



More Terms of Reference Needed

The checklists made available by the City link to several additional terms of references for certain report requirements, but not all documents potentially required in an application process have terms of references developed for them.



Increased Municipal Charges

Based on our modelling and scenarios, Edmonton's municipal charges for low-rise development (+34%) and high-rise (+49%), though below average in terms of charges per unit, increased at a faster rate than the study-wide average.

About the

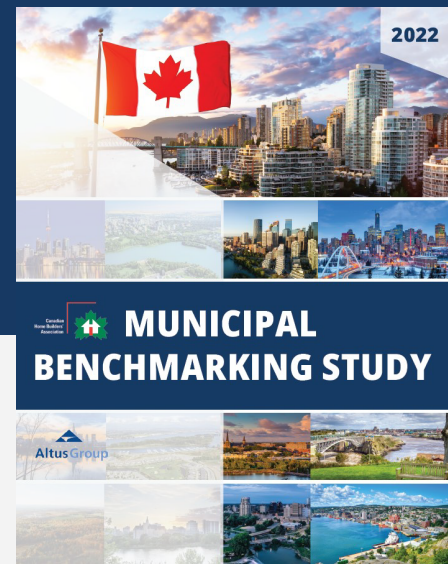
CHBA Municipal Benchmarking Study

www.chba.ca/municipal-benchmarking

The Municipal Benchmarking Study was commissioned by the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) and delivered by Altus Group. The study compares 23 Canadian municipalities, examining how their processes, approvals timelines, and charges and fees contribute to housing affordability and supply issues in major housing markets across Canada. The report reads as a report card to show which municipal governments are leading in which of the three pillars of the study—planning system features, approval timelines and government charges.

“This report is intended to support the important conversation with all orders of government on major challenges to housing affordability and the efficient delivery of much needed new housing supply. We’ve undertaken this work to showcase where municipal governments have the policies and systems in place to support supply and affordability, and provide a path forward for improvements where things aren’t working as well.”

— Kevin Lee, CEO, CHBA



Notes

The research for the study was completed prior to March 16, and therefore prior to the COVID related public health measures.

The rankings only reflect what was studied, and the results are based on readily available or public information. Planning systems vary between provinces, and implementation of provincial planning systems can vary between municipalities. The results examine things that are comparable across the country but may not reflect the full processes, approvals, or charges in this community.

The results are independent of the quality of the relationship between the municipal government and the residential construction industry.

LOCAL INSIGHTS

This Local Insights page allows constituent local/provincial associations of CHBA to bring out more local context, including any successes, priorities and challenges from the report or since the original data was collected.



Current Development Issues

The City of Edmonton, in 2020, approved The City Plan, a combined Municipal Development Plan and Transportation Master Plan. This plan is premised on the choices that Edmonton will need to make to accommodate one million more residents and to create 520,000 jobs. The plan calls for intensification within the city's current boundaries, with 50% located in the core of the city.



The City of Edmonton is advancing an overhaul of its Zoning Bylaw, with a desire to develop regulations that are simple and straightforward, to create economic growth opportunities, and to attract investment to build livable and attainable communities. The Zoning Bylaw will be discussed by Council in late 2023.

Additional Context

City building partners. Development success in Edmonton has been a collaborative undertaking between public, private, and community sectors. When changes are proposed, the City engages all sectors to better understand impacts and opportunities.

Clear and permissive regulations. Edmonton is a national leader in advancing bold changes to its regulatory environment to be more development-friendly. In the past decade, Edmonton has amended its zoning bylaw to support a range of land uses, buildings, developments, and investments – from removing parking minimums that create barriers to affordable housing to abolishing single-family-only zoning to enable diverse housing options in all areas of the city.

Easy and quick processes. Edmonton has embraced innovation, seeking ways to expedite development permit application review and approvals – from automation of non-complex development applications to setting/publicizing service timelines. The City migrated its development services to web-based platforms – offering applicants the opportunity to apply for land use changes, development and building permits, and business licenses online.

“As city-building partners, the Canadian Home Builders' Association - Edmonton Region is encouraged by the continued effort from the City of Edmonton to reduce red tape and establish a supportive regulatory environment. This includes innovative work on zoning, inspections, and process improvements to reduce timelines. The City works in collaboration with the industry to ensure continued growth and the building of beautiful spaces Edmontonians call home.”

— Laura Bruno, CEO, CHBA-ER

“Nationally, there is a strong desire by municipalities to address adequate housing supply and speed-to-market for development. Edmonton has demonstrated leadership in advancing a regulatory environment that enables more development opportunity and housing diversity, in addition to expediting changes to permitting processes and timelines to ensure predictability, innovation, and automation.”

— Kalen Anderson, Executive Director, UDI-EM

For more information about living, working, and investing in Edmonton please visit: [why.edmonton.ca](https://www.why.edmonton.ca)

