



**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
MEMORANDUM**

Page: 1
File:
Pending #:

TO: MAYOR, A. NUTTALL AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: M. BANFIELD, RPP, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, EXT. 5466

**NOTED: B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P. ENG., PMP, GENERAL MANAGER OF
INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: 2022 MUNICIPAL BENCHMARKING STUDY

DATE: NOVEMBER 30, 2022

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an overview of the 2022 Municipal Benchmarking Study, prepared by Altus Group Economic Consulting on behalf of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD).

OVERVIEW

The second Municipal Benchmarking Study, prepared by Altus Group Economic Consulting on behalf of BILD, was released on September 27, 2022.

The study examined municipal approval processes, timelines for approval and government charges, as well as comparing approaches across municipalities for dealing with the approval and development of new housing. It also highlighted key features in promoting the approval of new housing and construction, as well as the cost implications of municipal processes and policies.

The City of Barrie was ranked first among sixteen municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area for new housing approvals. The City placed in the top four in the three categories reviewed, resulting in the highest weighted average score. The three categories included:

- Planning Features – Ease of working with a municipality while moving through the approvals process, including level of transparency and availability of tools and resources;
- Approval Timelines – Time it takes for varying types of housing development projects to get approved and ready for construction; and
- Government Charges – Amount of money a municipality will charge developers to build.

The City ranked second in Planning Features, third in Approval Timelines, and fourth in Government Charges, resulting in an aggregated score of 3.1 (Figure 1 – Combined Rankings). The City earned “best in class” 100% scores in two areas of this year’s study along with two scores in the 80% to 90% percentile.

100% Scores:

- Development Guidance - Comprehensive, helpful information provided on the City’s website in terms of planning applications forms, documents, and guides; and
- Availability of Key Planning Documents.

80% to 90% Scores:

- Development Application Tracking; and
- Electronic Submission and Payment Capabilities.

This is the second time that the City has earned the top spot in the benchmarking study, as the City was ranked number one in the first study in 2020. The City was able to maintain first place despite the impacts of the pandemic, increased material costs and a significant influx of development applications.

Combined Ranking - 2022 Municipal Benchmarking Study - Greater Toronto Area					
Rank	Municipality	Rank by Category			Total Score
		Approval Timelines	Government Charges	Planning Features	
		<i>fastest to lowest</i>	<i>lowest to highest</i>	<i>most to least</i>	
1	Barrie	3	4	2	3.1
2	Oakville	5	9	3	6.0
3	Milton	1	7	10	6.1
4	Bradford West Gwillimbury	7	1	13	6.4
5	Oshawa	6	2	14	6.8
6	Brampton	4	10	6	7.0
7	Clarington	8	3	12	7.2
8	Burlington	12	5	7	7.7
9	Whitby	2	6	16	7.8
10	Mississauga	9	13	4	9.1
11	Innisfil	10	8	15	10.7
12	Toronto	15	15	1	10.8
13	Markham	11	14	8	11.3
14	Richmond Hill	14	12	9	11.7
15	Vaughan	13	16	5	11.8
16	Caledon	16	11	11	12.5
Weighting by Category		30%	40%	30%	
Source: Altus Group Economic Consulting					

Figure 1 - Combined Rankings

The study also found that municipal approval times have worsened for most municipalities during the last two years, with average timelines increasing by 41% and between 27-53%, depending on application type. The best average approval timelines were found in Milton, Whitby, Barrie, Oakville and Brampton, each below 16 months. The City's average approval timelines were 12 months in 2020, and 13 months in 2022. A summary of municipal feedback in the study indicated that key issues to improving timelines include: staffing resources, turnaround times for resubmissions to respond to comments and community input, and conforming to requirements in the *Planning Act* and other related statutes and regulations.

This year's study also noted forced changes driven by the pandemic. Most municipalities were pressed to adopt some form of online system for the intake of development applications or building permits due to necessity. Municipal staff noted that the move to online systems has been generally positive in allowing for enhanced customer service and convenience, more efficient tracking and administration, and opportunities for remote work across the GTA. The development industry also indicated that the move to online portals has reduced paper-based document requirements and allowed consultants to work on submissions at any time. The shift to virtual meetings for planning purposes also saves time and costs for developers and their consultants.

The second Municipal Benchmarking Study can be found in its entirety at the following link: <https://www.bildgta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Municipal-Benchmarking-Study-2022.pdf>

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Banfield, Director of Development Services, at 705-739-4220 ext. 5466 or by email at Michelle.Banfield@Barrie.ca.