

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary concerning the City of Barrie's (the "City") use of the Province of Ontario's (the "Province") Streamline Development Approvals Fund ("SDAF") to help modernize, streamline, and accelerate processes for managing and approving housing applications.

Over the last 18 months, staff from Development Services, Information Technology ("IT"), Finance, Building, and Business Performance led initiatives to utilize the SDAF Funding. In addition, temporary staff were hired in Waste Management and Environmental Sustainability, and Development Services to assist with development reviews.

In total, the City spent **\$1,481,944.85** on eligible costs which will be submitted to the Province to be funded by the SDAF.

Background

On January 19, 2022 the Province announced the SDAF whereby the City would receive funding to implement streamlining initiatives such as e-permitting systems, temporary staff to eliminate/reduce backlogs, and online applications portals.

On March 4th, 2022 the City entered into an agreement with the Province to receive funds with a requirement that an interim report be provided to the Province by April 22, 2022 and a final report by February 28, 2023. On January 24th, 2023, it was announced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that the final report date would be changed to November 1, 2023 and all funds must be utilized by this date. The final report will include a description of the project(s), how the projects were completed, how funds were allocated, proof of payment and a publicly accessible staff report outlining usage of the funds.

On March 24, 2022, the City received \$875,000 from the Province as the first payment from the SDAF with the balance of the funds used to be received by the City within 30 days after the City submits its final report to the Province. The initial payment was used to pay for salaries of temporary positions and project milestone invoices up until March 31, 2023.

On April 21, 2022, an Interim Report was submitted to the Province outlining the proposed projects that the City would undertake to utilize the funding.

SDAF Criteria

The Province set the following criteria for use of the funding:

1. Procuring consulting or fee-for-service resources to do one or more of the following:
 - a. Identify and assist the Recipient to implement more efficient processes for the Recipient's development approvals;
 - b. Prepare draft changes to the Recipient's zoning by-laws and explore opportunities to accommodate new housing development as-of-right;
 - c. Implement or enhance implementation of Community Planning Permits system with a housing component;
 - d. Review council decision-making process related to development approvals and make recommendations for streamlining those processes, including delegating certain planning decisions to the Recipient's staff where considered appropriate;
 - e. Develop draft Community Improvement Plans that include housing incentives; and
 - f. Undertake studies to support new housing types;
2. Implementing e-permitting systems or online "Manage My Application" systems that provide for online status checking, interaction between applicant and planners, fee payments, and ability to start additional permits and view agency comments.
3. Implementing systems that enable the use of online application forms, which allow for the submission of supporting documents, drawings and studies as well as standardizes forms, drawings, studies and data submissions.
4. Developing online application guides to help applicants select a location, identify development type, and follow a step-by-step guide to determine application submission requirements.
5. Implementing online booking and web meetings systems for pre-consultation and planning meetings.
6. Purchasing data/application management/workflow software, digital drawing software, or 3D tools to assist with design and visualization of development applications.
7. Purchasing software or hardware to improve the Recipient's efficiency in handling payments related to development approvals, such as new hardware or software to handle online payments or credit card payments.
8. Standardizing terminology, application processes, and data requirements as well as developing terms of reference to improve the customer experience and position partners for simpler data sharing.
9. Hiring temporary staff to deal with backlogs related to development approvals, including inspectors and Committee of Adjustment clerks.
10. Implementing diversity internship programs to support diversification or planning or building departments including internships for qualified students or new graduates with a focus on people with disabilities, Indigenous, Black, and racialized individuals, and people from diverse ethnic and cultural origins, sexual orientations, and gender identities and expressions; and
11. Other initiatives to streamline the Recipient's development approval processes, with written approval of the province.

City staff assessed potential initiatives that would further the province's goal of streamlining development approvals and determined projects to meet the Province's objectives as set out below.

Completed Projects

Project Description (Cost including HST)	Expected Benefits/Outcomes
<p>1. Accela Upgrade and Portal Redesign (\$181,075.72)</p> <p>Procured a vendor to complete a software upgrade which provided the City an updated version of the Accela software, including additional functionality that can be utilized by staff to improve submission and application processing.</p> <p>In addition to the software upgrade, the vendor also completed a redesign of the customer portal which made the system more user friendly for both applicants and residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional functionality for geolocating. - Improved customer experience including easier access to services such as record search, surveys and support. - Reduced customer time to submit applications.
<p>2. Accela Enhancements (\$355,085.55)</p> <p>In addition, to the work above, the vendor (in conjunction with IT and applicable business units) completed configuration on a number of different application types within Accela to improve the processing of Development Applications and Building Permits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Draft Plan of Subdivision workflow to automate circulation of Draft Subdivision Agreements • Develop a report for use by applicants to determine all unpaid fees associated with Development and Building Permit Applications • Auto-relating building permits to the applicable Subdivision or Site Plan Application • Functionality that will allow the invoicing of multiple applications fees at once • Creation of reports that will partially automate the reports required by the Province of Ontario as enacted in O. Reg 73/23. • Configuration Enhancements to Site Alteration Permits to include work conducted by Field Coordinators • Configuration to allow for the reporting to the Province • A new application type that allows for the digital submission and processing of Condominium Applications • A new application type that allows for the digital submission and processing of Part Lot Control/Deeming By-law Applications • A new application type that allows for the digital submission and processing of Removal of Hold Provision Applications • Enhancements to Building Permit workflows and record statuses to improve processing of Building Permits • Enhancements to Building Permit Reporting • Enhancement to Building Permit automatic notifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff time saved. - Improved customer experience including online submission of 3 new development applications and additional inspection options. - Reduced paper. - Improved communication between City Staff and Applicants. - Improved/Increased reporting capabilities.

3. Temporary Agreements Officer (\$102,080.30) Hired a temporary Agreements Officer for the purpose of expediting the preliminary review and deeming complete of Planning Applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced time to deem application complete or incomplete, reducing overall processing times.
4. Temporary Risk Management Inspectors (\$235,766.95) Hired two (2) temporary Risk Management Inspectors for the purpose of eliminating development application review backlogs and ensuring all comments are received by the deadline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eliminated development review backlogs. - 100% of comment deadlines now being met by Risk Management.
5. Draft of new Zoning By-law (\$288,878.80) Procured a consultant to assist with the drafting of a new Comprehensive Zoning By-law to enact the policies in the approved Official Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Zoning By-law drafted.
6. 3D Modeling Software (\$32,195.64) Procured a 3D modeling software that will assist with policy development and community consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved policy making through visualization of proposed changes. - Improved public consultation through visualization of proposed developments and their impact on existing neighbourhoods.
7. Development Approval Process Review (\$137,286.51) Procured a consultant to complete a review of the Development Approvals Process and provide a report which included recommended improvements to the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas of focus identified for improvements to be completed by City Staff.
8. Digital Information Standards Review (\$149,575.38) Procured a consultant to review the process by which the City accepts digital drawings (developers and infrastructure) for use in GIS and other City applications. In addition, software and hardware were purchased to implement the recommended process changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff time saved to fix/convert digital drawings and information. - Improved data.

The Corporation of the City of Barrie confirms that the projects were carried out and the funds spent in accordance with the Ontario Payment Transfer Agreement for the Streamline Development Approvals Fund.


ALEX NUTTALL, MAYOR

October 30, 2023
Date


WENDY COOKE, CITY CLERK

October 30, 2023
Date