Recent City of Markham Development Review Process Improvements

- **Implemented streamlined site plan (SPC), zoning by-law amendment (ZBA), and official plan amendment (OPA) processes**
  The streamlined site plan, zoning by-law amendment, and official plan amendment processes involves quickly circulating the application for review while concurrently deeming the application complete or incomplete, reducing the number of review cycles to 1, and commenting and marking up drawings in ePLAN Project Dox. The changes were a result of the City undertaking a Lean Review to examine further opportunities for efficiencies in the development process and in response to Bill 109 and 23 fee refunds if provincially prescribed timelines were not met (60 days SPC, 90 days ZBA, 120 days OPA/ZBA). As a result of Bill 185 the fee refund provisions have been removed but staff continue to implement the process changes.

- **Implemented new municipal services (MSA) and parks and open space agreement processes as a result of the updated site plan process**
  These two individual processes are required prior to issuance of a building permit and new processes within and outside of ePLAN were prepared. All developments requiring Site Plan approval, within the City of Markham (City), must execute a MSA before a Building Permit can be issued. Municipal Services include, but not limited to, infrastructure upgrades, entrance(s), lighting, water, sanitary sewer and / or storm sewer system connections, tree planting or other related works external to the site.

  Development or redevelopment of lands within Markham are subject to the parkland conveyance and/or payment in lieu of parkland and Community Benefits Charges, with some exceptions, according to the Planning Act and Markham's plans, strategies and bylaws.

  The Parks and Open Space Agreement process facilitates the conveyance of parkland according to the Parkland Dedication By-law-2022-102 and s.42 of the Planning Act

- **Council approved Lean review identifying 18 recommendation areas for improvement**
  The Lean approach includes 18 recommendation areas and more specific recommendations within to help Markham scale operations to match the increasing complexity and volume of development it is experiencing. As a result of process improvements undertaken some Lean recommendations have been superseded or completed (e.g. development fee by-law update, application intake workflow) while staff are implementing certain recommendations including

submission standards templates and internal standard operating procedures for development applications.

- **Upgraded ePLAN (Project Dox) development review software**
ePLAN Project Dox has been the City's electronic development application and building permit review and commenting software tool since 2018 This software eliminates the need for investing multiple tools, resulting in cost savings and increased efficiencies. The ePLAN Project Dox 9.2 Upgrade project involved the migration and deployment of the Production and Test Environments from the City's on-premise environment to cloud followed by the ePLAN Project Dox Upgrade from version 9.1 to 9.2. The major upgrade of the ePLAN Project Dox software to version 9.2 enabled additional features that have improved both the applicant and reviewer experience.

  The additional features included the following upgrades to the applicant's experience:
  • Providing easier drawing upload tools,
  • Consolidating corrections,
  • Accessing and distributing corrections to multiple consultants,
  • Automatic filing of versions and identification of duplicate files,
  • Notifying the user when new files are uploaded and identifying the versions,
  • Providing project status emails to multiple project members (applicants); and
  • Providing a simpler City comments response form

  It also includes the following reviewer's experience upgrades for Staff:
  • Packaging drawings and providing a single window for review /comment,
  • Providing a read/unread feature for drawings and ability to select drawings that are acceptable,
  • Simplifying the file version and global file compare options,
  • Providing a tool similar to a shopping cart for overall corrections added; and
  • Simplifying the quick review initiation process with outside agencies and other departments.

  Additional upgrades have since occurred and is now up to Project Dox 9.3 and soon to be 9.4.

- **Implemented updated ePLAN website application submission process**
The ePLAN Web Portal Update project involved updating the current ePLAN Web Portal to allow for easy navigation and implementing changes to improve the applicant's web portal for a better user interface.

- **Developed a mobile app for building permit inspections**
  The Mobile Inspection App project involved the creation of a mobile app to be used for building inspections. The app is intended to improve the inspectors' process by allowing them to easily access inspection requests, approval documents, and property history in the field.

- **Developed electronic 3D modelling software to support application review**
  The City retained WSP Canada Inc. to prepare an electronic 3D model for Markham Centre and Markham Road/ Mount Joy Secondary Plan areas in ArcGIS CityEngine. The purpose of this model is to improve and add productivity and efficiency in the functions of the development application review process including the following:

  - Enable Staff to calculate development site statistics and compare alternative site statistics quickly
  - Assist Staff to analyze proposed developments and provide recommendations
  - Enable Staff to review the impact of the development application on the surrounding context; and
  - Inform policy initiatives such as Secondary Plans, Official Plan reviews.

- **Prepared MappiT online public development applications viewer**
  MappiT is the City's GIS Interface project for development applications. The intent of this project is to help increase transparency in the development application process. MappiT also supports the private sector and consultants by allowing technical studies identified or already completed to be leveraged to support future applications and technical requirements. This project showcases all development applications by type and year and includes supporting documentation related to each application.

- **New Development Fee By-law Implementation**
  Supporting the development application process is the Development Fee by-law, which contains fees associated to process and review of development applications. The new By-law was approved by Council in December 2023 and is being implemented to ensure full cost recovery and reasonable charges.

- **Comprehensive Zoning By-law (CZBL)**
  In early 2024, the City approved the CZBL, which is currently in effect, that modernized the City's approach to zoning review following the consolidation of 46 different parent zoning by-laws applied to different geographic areas of the City from 1954 to 2004. The CZBL will ensure predictability and consistent review of development applications.

- **Telecommunications facilities process update**

  With the City's limited jurisdiction around the regulation of telecommunication facilities, staff updated the review process of these facilities to reflect the municipality's legislative role that includes:

  - Communication to proponents of location and aesthetic preferences, and relevant planning priorities and characteristics to a proposed system
  - Advising the proponent on the public consultation requirements

- **Terms of References prepared that support updated Pre-Application Consultation process responding to Bill 109**
  - Community Infrastructure Impact Statement

  - Natural Heritage Compensation Plan

  - Natural Heritage Constraints Map

  - Delineation of the Rouge Natural Watershed Protection Area

  - Comprehensive Block Plan

  - Angular Plane Study

  - Arborist Report and Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan

  - Transportation Impact Assessment Study

  - Community Design Plan

  - Sun and Shadow Study

  - Urban Design Brief

  - Wind Study

  - Arborist Report

  - 12 different Engineering Reports and Submission Outlines ranging from Functional Servicing report to transportation Impact Study

- **City-wide Urban Design Guidelines**
  Staff are developing comprehensive design guidance to provide direction on a variety of building typologies that supports housing delivery and complete communities, resulting in a more efficient review process with greater certainty in development outcomes.

- **Age Friendly Design Implementation**
  Staff are developing checklists, guides and training sessions to help streamline application of the guidelines through development review

- **Streetscape Guidelines/Manual and Tree Permits**
  In delivering complete communities, staff are developing / updating various guidelines to streamline reviews and expedite development approvals, including

a one-window approach for tree preservation and removals through development review

- Urban Design has streamlined other processes, e.g. removal of **Townhouse Siting Approval** process/integration with TEC Application and Architectural Design Control (Plan of Subdivision)

- **Development Engineering related improvements**
    - Engaging with developers and set up Bi-weekly meetings to discuss and resolve any issues, resulting in quick decision making
    - Creating various Checklists (such as Pre-Servicing Agreement Checklist, TEC Checklist, PAC Checklist etc.) for better and clear communication with the developers
    - Creating Deviation Forms to assist developers to communicate with the City and get approvals, if for any reason, they are unable to meet the City's Standards
    - Retained external consultant to work on streamlining the review and approval process for underground SWM facilities and developing policies, design criteria, and engineering specifications
    - Working with other departments to streamline process for MECP (CLI-ECA). This will result in quicker approval for ECA, as it will be delegated to the City
    - Continuously working for improving and streamlining the process by preparing process documents

- **Building Standards related improvements**
    - Fully implement Zoning Preliminary Review service that allows the public to obtain confirmation of zoning compliance at the design stage prior to building permit submission
    - Streamlined internal circulation notice to planning and engineering to facilitate conditional permit clearances
    - ePLAN Owner Notification - Process enhancement for owner notification on ePLAN file activity
    - Streamline infill housing demolition applications with the associated new housing permit
    - Working group developed strategy to improve infield use of technology, streamline processes and eliminate manual paper based processes
    - Introduction of Pre Permit Consultation service to allow developers to receive Building Code comments in advance of development approvals and permit applications. This allows the design team to address any significant Code compliance issues during the design stage and reduces the amount of time spent during permit application review.
    - Ongoing development and publication of Builder Tips to assist designers and contractors on Building Code compliance for challenging or new Building Code requirements.