

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Planning and Economic Development
March 9, 2023

Report of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner

2022 Annual Development Activity Summary

1. Recommendation

The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and local municipalities.

2. Summary

Council has delegated authority to the Chief Planner and Director of Community Planning and Development Services to issue approvals for development applications to streamline the process, subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually. Delegated approval authority includes routine Local Official Plan Amendments (OPAs), the majority of which are exempt from Regional approval helping to streamline the process, and approval of works adjacent to Regional rights-of-way and infrastructure. York Region is a commenting agency to local municipalities for draft plans of subdivision and condominium, site plans, consent to sever, zoning by-law amendment, and minor variance applications on matters of Regional interest.

Details of the 2022 Development Application Activity for each municipality are included in Attachment 1. Included on the same Council agenda for the March 9, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting is The Housing Supply Update memo providing the number of units for approved and proposed development applications in the approval pipeline.

Key Points:

- 4,766 residential units received draft approval in 2022 (1,379 single detached units, 494 semi-detached units and 2,893 townhouse units)
- Twenty-five OPA applications were delegated to the local municipalities for decision and seventeen notices of decision were issued by York Region
- The Region received 2,092 development applications and pre-consultations in 2022 representing a 2% increase compared to 2021 (2,050)
- Development charge collections fluctuate from year to year and in 2022 increased by 24% to \$568,088,449 from \$457,348,103 in 2021

- Proposed residential units in new draft plan of subdivision applications increased to 3,168 in 2022 from 1,692 in 2021 and proposed residential units in new site plan applications increased to 18,547 in 2022 from 12,353 in 2021. The increase in proposed residential units in new site plan applications primarily represent development proposals in the cities of Richmond Hill, Vaughan, and Markham
- Fee Revenue for Development Planning and Engineering increased by 21% to \$5,130,069 in 2022 from \$4,238,279 in 2021
- The Region launched a [public dashboard](#) on York.ca that provides the current Regional status of all development applications and staff contacts for easy access.

3. Background

Bill 23 proposes changes to the *Planning Act* including removal of Council's planning approval authority

The *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) proposes changes to the *Planning Act* which removes Council's approval authority for local official plans and amendments and removes the Region's right to appeal land use planning decisions. These provisions are not yet proclaimed. Until then, the Region continues to be the approval authority of official plans and amendments as reflected in this report. The majority of local OP/OPA approvals are without issue and exempt from Regional approval to expedite the process. Following proclamation, the Region will still provide comments on official plans, amendments, and development applications to municipalities.

Authority to approve certain development applications is delegated to the Chief Planner and Director of Community Planning and Development Services

In addition to reporting on OPA approvals, the 2022 development activity report summarizes the number of new residential applications and associated residential units received, together with the total number of residential units registered. The following information is presented in the Development Activity Summary Report:

- Approval of Local OPAs with no Regional requirements – Delegated
 - Subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually
- Exemption of Local OPAs from Regional approval – Delegated
 - The Region has authority to exempt an OPA from Regional approval if it is determined to be of local significance and there are no Regional requirements. The Regional Official Plan sets out criteria to determine if an amendment is eligible for exemption. If the application qualifies for exemption, the local municipality will issue the decision for the OPA.
 - Subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually
- New development applications received
- Proposed residential units received

- Number of registered plans of subdivision, draft approved and registered units
- Approval of works in the Regional right-of-way as part of site plan applications with Regional requirements – Delegated
- Engineering approval of works in the Regional right-of-way – Delegated
- Planning and Development Engineering review fee and Development charge collection

All nine local municipalities provide data to ensure an accurate Regional development activity report

Since 2017, York Region, with assistance from the local municipalities, has been collecting and tracking development-related information and data received on each application in YorkTrax. Application information on location, nature of proposal, number of units, non-residential floor area, status, progress, and associated applications are captured, and development trends can be analyzed for reporting. As data continues to be collected in YorkTrax, the Region can more accurately track development activity in each municipality and on a region-wide basis to assess trends. Future connections of local systems with YorkTrax through a data exchange, will improve accuracy and timing. Data and trends will continue to be reported to Council on a regular basis and provide useful live dashboards and products to assist both the Local and Regional understanding of development trends.

4. Analysis

In 2022, 71 local Official Plan Amendment applications were received of which 25 were exempted from Regional approval

York Region received 71 local OPA applications in 2022, representing a 9% decrease compared to 2021. OPAs are required when development proposals do not conform to existing Official Plan policies. A majority of OPAs proposed changes to building height, density, built form and urban design. Typically, additional development applications are required after the approval of an OPA, or submitted concurrently, including Zoning Bylaw Amendments, Draft Plan of Subdivision and Condominium, Engineering and Site Plan applications.

The Director of Community Planning and Development Services issued decisions on a total of 42 local OPA applications in 2022; approval authority for 25 local OPAs was delegated to the local municipalities and 17 notices of decision were issued on local OPAs. Not all applications received a decision within the year and some decisions issued were for applications received prior to 2022. The Region retained approval authority for 16 local OPAs to ensure conformity with the Regional Official Plan and local secondary plan updates. There has been an increasing number of site specific OPAs in advance of completion of local Secondary Plans which requires Regional approval due to the absence of a comprehensive plan being in place to ensure adequate Regional and Local infrastructure and facilities are provided. Twenty-five OPAs were exempted from Regional approval as these proposals did not adversely affect Regional planning policies and requirements – this streamlines the

planning approval process. The Region will continue to comment on official plans and development applications after the Bill 23 regulations remove Regional Council's planning approval authority. This will assist local municipalities and ensure Regional issues and requirements are considered. A list of local OPAs with approval status by municipality is provided in Attachment 1.

The number of development applications received in 2022 remained consistent with 2021

Table 1 identifies the number of new applications received by the Region by type in 2022, compared to the previous four years. Primary applications are OPAs, Block Plans, Draft Plan of Subdivision, Zoning Bylaws, Draft Plan of Condominiums, and Engineering and Site Plans, accounting for 509 new development applications, which is consistent with the 512 applications in 2021. In addition to these primary applications, the other development applications were received, including site plans (with no Regional requirements), pre-application proposals, consent to sever and minor variances for review and information purposes. In total, the Region received 2,092 new applications in 2022, compared to 2,050 in 2021.

The total number of new development applications increased 2% in 2022 compared to 2021. Approximately 64% of all new applications received in 2022 were in the Cities of Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan. A breakdown of new development applications by municipality is provided in Attachment 1.

Table 1
Number of New Applications Received by Type of application from 2018 to 2022

Primary Applications	Application Type (New Applications)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Regional Official Plan Amendment	0	0	1	1	0
	Block Plan	3	3	3	4	0
	Local Official Plan Amendment	58	52	75	78	71
	Draft Plan of Subdivision	54	31	34	29	53
	Zoning Bylaw Amendment	168	129	136	154	150
	Draft Plan of Condominium	28	27	26	25	27
	Engineering Review	38	41	36	47	39
	Site Plans Application (Minor and Major) ¹	182	168	153	174	169
	Development Application Total	531	451	464	512	509

Application Type (Continued) (New Applications)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Site Plan (No Regional Requirements) ²	109	103	105	122	162
Pre-Application Proposal	472	525	532	679	567
Consent to sever Application	174	141	79	104	102
Minor Variances Application	630	459	467	633	752
Total Applications Received	1,916	1,679	1,647	2,050	2,092

¹ Major and minor site plans are determined based on the value of construction work proposed in the Regional right-of-way. More complex right-of-way works require more comprehensive review.

² No Regional requirements e.g., not adjacent to a Regional Road or infrastructure, source water protection area. Applications are received for information purposes only.

The number of proposed residential units increased significantly in 2022 by 55%

In 2022, the number of proposed residential units received by the Region for review as part of new draft plan of subdivision applications was 3,168. This is significantly higher than 1,692 units received in 2021, representing an 87% increase. There were 18,547 proposed residential units received for review as part of new site plan applications compared to 12,353 units received in 2021, representing an 50% increase (Table 2). A majority (84%) of these proposed units were in the southern three municipalities (Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan), which are experiencing a high amount of intensification.

Development activity, including the number of proposed residential units, fluctuates from year to year and is often dependent on various factors, many outside of the Region's control. Multiple high-density residential developments received in the cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan represent 71% of residential units proposed as part of new site plan applications.

The Housing Supply Update (March 2023) indicates the Region has a strong supply of residential inventory, well within Provincial requirements that a 3-to-7-year supply of draft approved and registered plans be maintained. As of the end of December 2022, the Region has an approved housing supply of an estimated 65,900 units. Within this supply, there are 9,000 registered unbuilt units, and an additional 36,600 draft approved units. In addition, there are 20,300 housing units under construction that will be occupied by residents upon completion.

Table 2
Proposed Residential Units Received from 2018 to 2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Proposed Subdivision Units ¹	9,843	1,776	5,781	1,692	3,168
Proposed Site Plan units ²	14,402	7,428	13,637	12,353	18,547
Total proposed units	24,245	9,204	19,418	14,045	21,715

¹ Proposed residential units associated with draft plan of subdivision applications (no apartments)

² Proposed residential site plan units. Units include site plan applications with no regional requirements.

Engineering approvals decreased compared to 2021 but remain consistent with the 5-year average

Engineering approvals are issued for works proposed as part of subdivision applications or local municipal capital projects which involve Regional infrastructure or are located in the Region's right-of-way. A high number of engineering applications were received in 2021 with 47 applications compared with the previous three years (Table 1). Engineering applications decreased in 2022 by 17% (39 applications) but remained consistent with 2018 to 2020 totals.

Approvals were issued for 25 subdivision-related engineering plans and other projects in 2022, which is consistent with the 5-year average (Table 3). These applications involve both above-ground and below ground engineering works, including intersection and access improvements, road widening, electrical and signalization, storm, water, and sanitary servicing connections, property grading and construction access.

The number of engineering applications are tied to approvals required for subdivision applications to proceed to clearance for registration. As a result of the higher Engineering approvals in 2021, the Region received a higher number of registrations in 2022 (Table 4). Given the number of new engineering applications received and consistent number of engineering approvals, steady growth will continue as these applications proceed to registration and construction.

Table 3
Engineering Approval as Part of Site Plan Applications

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Approved Engineering Applications	30	29	25	41	25

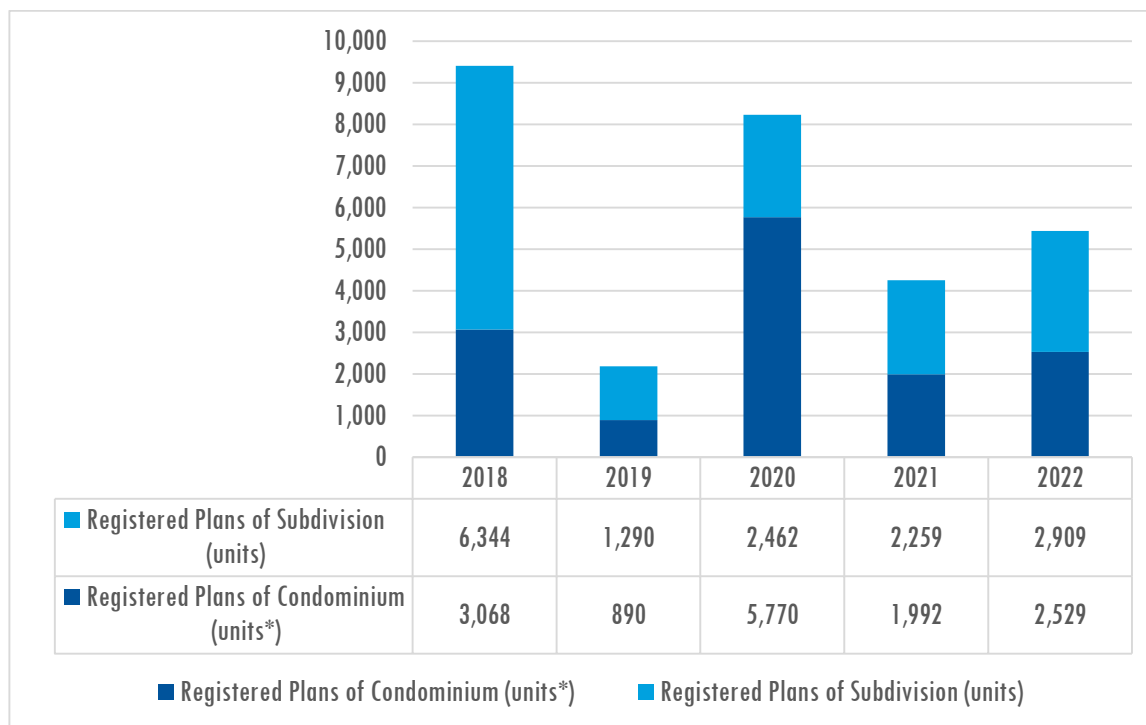
Total residential units registered in 2022 increased 28% from 2021

Sixty-four registered plans of subdivision and condominium applications were submitted in 2022 compared to 48 in 2021 (Table 4). Associated registered residential units were 5,438 compared to 4,251 registered units in 2021, representing a 28% increase (Figure 1). The number of registered units fluctuates year to year as do engineering applications which are tied to subdivision registration. The increased number of engineering applications approved in 2021 resulted in an increase in the number of registered units in 2022.

Table 4
Registered Plans of Subdivision and Condominium Applications 2018 to 2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Registered Plans of Subdivision	47	21	26	30	44
Registered Plans of Condominium	38	24	35	18	20
Total	85	45	61	48	64

Figure 1
Registered Plans of Subdivision and Condominium Units 2018 to 2022



* Includes apartment units

The number of site plan applications receiving Regional approval increased in 2022

York Region approves engineering matters for site plan applications that impact Regional roads and infrastructure. Site plan applications are reviewed for planning and legal considerations in accordance with the *Planning Act*, protection of Regional wellheads, property requirements, travel demand management, transit, intersection and access design, road and servicing design, and development implications to the Regional road system and rights-of-way. Site plan applications consist of both small ground related infill proposals and major development applications that contribute towards the residential and non-residential inventory.

In 2022, 135 site plan applications received Regional approval compared to 126 approvals in 2021, representing a 7% increase (Table 5). The number of new minor and major site plan applications received remained consistent with last five year, whereas the number of site plan applications with no Regional requirements increased by 53%. These types of site plans include but are not limited to site alternation, additions to existing structure, infill development not on a Regional road, utility projects and access modifications. This may be reduced in future years as residential developments below 10 units will not require site plan applications as a result of Bill 23.

Table 5
Regional approval of Site Plan Applications

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Approved Site Plan Applications ¹	125	120	106	126	135

¹ Major and minor site plans with Regional requirements, e.g. adjacent to a Regional Road or infrastructure, source water protection area. More complex right-of-way works require more comprehensive review.

Regional staff participate on advisory committees and working groups to plan new development areas with local municipal partners

Regional staff actively participate in Regional and Local Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and Project Working Groups. This includes urban expansion areas, new Secondary Plans, Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) as well as Local Official Plan conformity. Input to these committees and working groups is important to ensure Regional requirements are identified early in the planning process. Regional staff also review pre-consultation requests to provide Regional comments and submission requirements for future development applications.

YorkTrax now provides access to local municipalities, developers, and the public for application status across the Region

As part of continuous improvement to the development process transparency and streamlining, the Region launched a public dashboard accessible from the Region's website. The dashboard provides the Regional current status of all development applications and staff contacts for easy access. It features an interactive map that can filter applications based on date received, municipality and application type.

5. Financial

Application fee revenues increased over the past four years

Development application fees are collected in accordance with Regional Bylaw No. 2010-15, as amended, for land use planning approvals and commenting for the plan review function. As shown in Table 6, Regional development fees collected in 2022 increased 21% compared to 2021. The increased fee revenue in 2022 is a result of submission fees for new applications received and complex applications requiring additional engineering works and fees associated with intensification projects.

Table 6
Fee Revenue for Development Planning and Engineering from 2018 to 2022

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
\$4,499,231	\$2,845,515	\$3,285,566	\$4,238,279	\$5,130,069

Development approvals in 2022 resulted in highest development charges revenue collected in the last five years

Development charges are collected through development approvals to pay for growth-related infrastructure. Development charges are collected at subdivision clearance and building permit issuance (Attachment 2). In 2022, \$568,088,449 in development charges was collected. This is an increase of 24% compared to \$457,348,103 in 2021

Bill 23 proposes several exemptions and discounts for attainable, affordable, non-profit, and rental housing. These exemptions, limit cost recovery through development charges, and may need to be funded from the tax levy or user rates.

On May 26, 2022, Council approved DC Bylaw No. 2022-31. The new Regional development charge rates came into effect on June 17, 2022 with an increase in soft services rates and a slight decrease in hard services rates.

Regional development charge increases have historically resulted in spikes of draft plan of subdivision registrations; however, the impact may be less pronounced this year due to:

- Decrease in the hard services rates under the 2022 DC Bylaw, which may have caused development to delay subdivision registration until after June 17
- The rate freezing provisions in effect

Development charge collections typically fluctuate year over year. Table 7 below outlines development charges collected from 2018 to 2021.

Table 7
Development Charges Collected from 2018 to 2022

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
\$431.9M	\$216.6M	\$279.3M	\$457.3M	\$568.1M

6. Local Impact

Regional staff work closely with local municipal staff to ensure the timely review of development applications, meeting Regional and local policy objectives, and approvals occur within the timelines prescribed by the *Planning Act*. Last year, the Region received Provincial funding through the Streamline Development Approval fund to implement changes that would streamline the development approval process.

The Region and its nine local municipal partners and Conservation Authorities are working together to develop planning data standards that includes a common application form, common terms of reference and a consistent process to streamline application submission requirements. This work will improve the customer experience and provide a more efficient process to support the Province's target to build 1.5 million homes in Ontario over the next 10 years.

7. Conclusion

Bill 23 proposes changes to *Subsection 1 (1) of the Planning Act* that will remove Regional Council's planning approval authority of local municipal official plans and amendments. These changes will come into force at a future proclamation date. The Region will maintain its commenting role and is committed to working closely with our local municipal partners.

The 2022 Annual Development Activity report summarizes delegated approvals and new development applications received by the Region in 2022 compared to recent years, using data collected from YorkTrax, to inform Council.

The Director of Community Planning and Development Services issued decisions on 42 local OPA applications in 2022. Twenty-five Official Plan Amendment applications were exempt from Regional approval and delegated to the local municipalities for decisions, and seventeen notices of decisions were issued. While the number of applications typically fluctuate annually due to the cyclical nature of development, applications received in 2022 remained consistent with last year.

Regional staff will continue to work closely with local municipal partners to achieve Regional and local policy objectives, implement provisions of Bill 23 and opportunities to streamline the approval process and ensures approvals are met within the timelines prescribed by the *Planning Act*.

For more information on this report, please contact Karen Whitney, Director of Community Planning and Development Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71505. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Recommended by:



Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP

Chief Planner



Dino Basso

Commissioner of Corporate Services

Approved for Submission:



Bruce Macgregor

Chief Administrative Officer

February 16, 2023

Attachment 1 – 2022 Annual Report

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