

City of Markham Development Review Process Improvements 2018 to 2023

Planning & Urban Design

- Zoning no longer circulated on Minor Variance and Consent applications as Zoning comments will be provided through separate process (primarily through Zoning Preliminary Review or Building Permit applications)
- Pilot the sharing of draft agreements to enable developers to begin understanding the financial and site specific implications, and have necessary discussions with staff, prior to the finalization of the agreement
- Streamlined preparation of tree preservation conditions and tree inspections for Committee of Adjustment applications
- Soft launch of site plan review and approvals, as well as Minor Variance and Committee of Adjustment review, through ePLAN online application submission
- Submission and processing of Pre-Consultation Requests, Townhouse Siting Applications, Draft Plan of Condominium and Site Alteration Permits available through ePLAN
- Internal and external PDF ePLAN guides and YouTube tutorials prepared and posted online and in Checkmark
- Planning Application forms (for OPA, ZBA, SU, MNV, CNST, etc.) have been converted into online fillable PDF forms
- Updated Application Management and Data Automation (AMANDA) electronic application tracking procedures for Official Plan Amendments; Zoning By-law Amendment; Subdivision and Site Plan applications
- Committee of Adjustment report sign off process digitized
- Revamped training for Committee of Adjustment members, including training for 'on the spot' amendments of applications to reduce deferrals
- Updated / standardized site plan agreement template
- A customized Parkland Calculation template was prepared to calculate parkland and cash-in-lieu requirements for all types of development applications. The chart is also designed to be circulated to the following departments for approval on specific matters as listed below. This chart will then be attached to a draft memo to Legal for Agreements and saved on AMANDA for future reference.
- For minor variance and severance applications, Urban Designers are not required to provide Planners with written comments. Comments will be discussed at team meetings and the Planner assigned to the file will prepare the comments and approval conditions. The tree preservation matters will be handled by Operations. This can potentially reduce the circulation time and help Urban Design staff to focus their efforts on more complex applications.
- Site Alteration Permit for Tree Removals prior to Agreement Execution: For Draft Plan of Subdivision and Site Plan applications that have been through several cycles of review and if tree removal /preservation is acceptable to Urban Design staff, Letters of Credit

will be collected for tree compensation through site alteration permits and the actual compensation value will be reconciled at the time of site plan/subdivision agreements.

- Minor Variance Staff report template updated to reflect Bill 108 with respect to secondary suites
- Digitization of Committee of Adjustment processes due to COVID-19 including:
 - Committee of Adjustment procedural by-law updated to permit meetings to be held virtually;
 - New Online, fillable deputation and interested party forms;
 - Meeting packages now sent to Committee members via Google Drive rather than through hardcopy couriered packages; and,
 - Notice of Decisions now digitally signed.
- The implementation of ePLAN electronic application submission and review in early 2020 was ahead of schedule due to COVID-19 and requires staff comments of development applications to be provided directly on the drawings in the application review software and are summarized for the applicant for them to further review in the drawings. ePLAN allows staff to provide a brief description of the comments while reviewing the Changemark Report which has the main comment in the drawings.
- The implementation of ePLAN requires first and second submissions to require full circulation to all staff involved in reviewing the development application. For third submission and any subsequent submissions the Development Technician and the lead Planner develop a list of staff that are required to review the re-submission (e.g. Reviewer "A" previously provided comments and is not required to review a re-submission but may need to review if a comment from reviewer "B" impacts reviewer "A").
- The implementation of ePLAN has clarified when internal commenting partners are circulated various types of development applications. For site plan applications internal commenting partners are circulated at the beginning of the application and the file Planner takes the lead coordinating comments. For Plan of Subdivision applications, internal commenting partners are involved at the technical drawing submission process of the application and are led by the Development Engineering team.
- York Region staff have regular meetings with City staff including meetings with the Commissioner and Director. While it continues to be a challenge, staff continue to seek opportunities with other external agencies including Ministry of Transportation to encourage them to use the ePLAN software and work in partnership on development matters.
- Staff reviewed the sign-off process for development review-related staff reports and recommends the existing process of Senior Manager, Director/s, Commissioner, and Chief Administrative Officer continue, as it will ensure accountability in the organization.

- To help streamline the report approval process, staff are using eScribe the online report review and approval platform. Staff have updated its process to keep track of the status of upcoming staff reports through milestones and dates by updating a reports list more frequently and updating senior staff in the organization regularly.
- The implementation of ePLAN in 2020 for development applications requires occasional updates to procedures for review and sign-off in ProjectDox the ePLAN software at various milestones in the development review process. Staff are documenting and prioritizing process changes identified.
- Processes improvements that occur outside of ePLAN are being identified and documented (e.g. public meeting preparation).
- Staff have updated procedures for Project Review meetings by documenting next steps and actions items. Details of an issue are provided by the lead Planner prior to a Project Review meeting.
- The implementation of ePLAN software in early 2020 was moved ahead from 2021 due to COVID-19 and assigns a lead Planner to a development application. The lead Planner is updated in the ePLAN software when there is staff turnover and a decision is made to reassign the development application.
- Revisions to preliminary report templates to document planning act mandated timelines before an application may be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal, and the date that this will occur
- Updated procedures for deeming planning applications complete (or accepting applications where the “complete application” process doesn’t apply) to address Provincial legislative changes to process for establishing Development Charges
- A series of refinements to the planning report templates to ensure that planning report formats are more consistent and concise
- Revisions to the review process for certain types of minor variance applications on single detached residential properties to provide for a more streamlined and consistent review process for tree preservation/compensation
- Multiple process changes to allow for digital, non-ePLAN related digital review of documents and sign offs, include digital review of draft planning reports; site plan and subdivision agreements; interdepartmental circulations and requests for comments; and sign off of invoices; cheque requisitions and expenses etc.
- Automated email is sent to Council every 2 weeks with a report of site plan, official plan amendment, zoning by-law amendment, plan of subdivision, and condo applications received within the previous 2 weeks. They have access to ProjectDox from ePLAN to view the “Council Circulations” folder which contains only submission files deemed appropriate for access
- Pre-consultation fee instituted prior to circulation to staff
- ePLAN online application launches for majority of applications
- Releasing of development applications comments mid-review cycle as long as the comment does not affect other commenting partners

- Early/partial endorsement with minimum requirements to accept a building permit application for review: site servicing plan, site grading plan, site plan, elevations
- Online payment can be made by anyone through Application Management and Data Automation (AMANDA) billing online where previously payment through ePLAN portal only allowed one person assigned
- Closing communication loops such that staff have asked to be notified when applications have reached approval and can be added to the distribution list
- Updated “Development Application Procedure” Manual to reflect new processes associated with ePLAN for Urban Design review process
- Provided updates to the standard urban design conditions for new standardized site plan agreement template and revised the urban design conditions for draft plan approval
- Created a streamlined review and approval process for parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu calculations using an Excel calculator and sign-off template to ensure consistency and accuracy
- Revised the review process for minor variance applications for single detached residential developments outside of Site Plan Control areas to provide a more streamlined and consistent review process for tree preservation/compensation
- Prepared terms of references for key urban design studies/documents to be submitted by applicants seeking development approvals such as Sun and Shadow Study, Urban Design Brief, Wind Study and Arborist Report
- Completed the Interim Parkland Cash-in-Lieu Strategy for medium and high density residential apartments to be implemented as part of all site plan and subdivision approvals
- Streamlined the review of proposed park sites in development applications and development agreement clauses related to parkland dedication and construction between Urban Design and Parks Development staff
- ePLAN ProjectDox metrics determined for average days per review task, % of review cycle deadlines met, average days for each milestone (e.g. circulation, re-circulation, endorsement, final approval, etc), and environmental indicators (e.g. paper saved, emissions saved, etc)
- Staff continue to assess the rollout of ePLAN from KPMG’s recommended areas of focus that includes resourcing, leading practices from the Building Standards earlier implementation, and educating external agencies and applicants.
- New updated and modernized Public Notice Signs and Decal (Pilot Project)
- Update Urban design team meeting structure to have UD staff bring applications for roundtable discussion, to educate staff, and improve coordination and consistency within the group and across development districts
- Invite special guests to team meetings to provide overview of process updates/improvements to UD team, including staff from Parks Planning, Brownfield, Natural Heritage and Zoning
- Updated Minor Variance Staff short form report templates for applications related to secondary suites

- A high level process list for each type of development application noting who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI).
- Managers and staff trained in Project Management in 2021 and 2022
- Update Pre-consultation checklist form for applicants of development applications to be editable during a Pre-consultation meeting so staff can prepare notes and update the checklist and provide in a more timely manner to the applicant.
- Email to applicants noting upcoming lapse of Subdivision conditions
- Updated and modernized Circulated Applications Dashboard to Councillors with additional information including drawings, Manager contacts, non-decision appeal date, site statistics, etc.
- Removed OPA, ZBA, Subdivision, and Site Plans (pre-Bill 109) from DSC meetings as part of Preliminary Reports process. These reports were renamed to Public Meeting Information Report and are prepared prior to a public meeting to inform the public.
- As a response to Bill 197, completed the City's Parkland Acquisition Study which informed the formulation of the new Parkland Dedication By-law which Council approved in September, 2022
- Developed and established a Tree Removal Only SALT permit process for Urban Design staff to administer, including ePLAN processing, permit letter and insurance/finance requirements.
- Urban Designers to attend Bylaw Amendment Review Committee (BARC) meetings to ensure zoning bylaw amendments are more comprehensively reviewed and to ensure design intent is accurately reflected in the site specific bylaw.
- Urban design updated processes related to condominium process, including: 1) updated condominium conditions to reflect increase of common element condos; 2) Updated template for condominium release letter to include list of deficiencies; 3) Prepared checklist for staff use
- Developed a series of Urban Design information sessions for new staff onboarding
- Review and clarify roles between Urban Designer, Streetscape Coordinator and Landscape Inspector in review of development applications to ensure consistency and comprehensive review
- Formalized some review disciplines that had previously been doing reviews that were not formally documented. These include:
 - Landscape Inspections
 - Streetscape Coordinator
 - Park Development
 - Hydrogeological Reviewer"
- 9 Terms of References prepared to support updated Pre-Application Consultation process that responds to Bill 109 - Community Infrastructure Impact Statement, Natural Heritage Compensation Plan, Natural Heritage Constraints Map, Delineation of the Rouge Watershed Protection Area, Comprehensive Block Plan, Angular Plane Study, Arborist

Report and Tree Inventory & Preservation Plan, Transportation Impact Assessment Study, Community Design Plan.

- The Planning webpages were updated with a focus on key information required and the steps for the various types of development applications. The review also includes other aspects of Planning including the Official Plan, Engineering services, Planning documents and studies, and ePLAN guidance information. Added Planning 101 sections and revised ePLAN Info page to provide more structured guidance on the application process.
- Lean Review completed with 18 group recommendations and 54 specific recommendations. Implementation to occur once new process are developed responding to Bill 109, Development Fee By-law review completed, and when new ProjectDox workflows are implemented. Though some of the Lean Review recommendations have been incorporated into the updated Bill 109 process such as Intake Workflow.
- New GIS based Development Application and Tree Permits viewer called MappiT to allow public access to development application information and status to provide transparency in the development review process. Created supporting webpage to host and explain what MappiT is and how to use it.
- ePLAN Project Dox 9.2 upgrade to cloud version to provide improved applicant and reviewer experiences such as: drawing uploads made easier within applicant task window, auto file version and identify files that are duplicates, accessing and distributing corrections to multiple consultants, , enhanced project status email to various project parties, ability to package up certain drawings and review. comment in one window, system will mark drawings the reviewer has already reviewed, initiating a quick review with outside agencies and other departments simplified.
- Updated ePLAN web portal for applicant submissions to be more intuitive when selecting what approvals are being applied for, navigation tools to current applications made easier, status of approvals made easier
- 3D model of Markham Centre and Markham Road/Mt. Joy Secondary Plan Areas to calculate development site statistics to inform staff analysis and recommendations. Phase 1 completed with the proposed and approved applications in the 3D model and Phase 2 to be completed in September 2023 with procedural rules.
- Updated Site Plan, OPA, and ZBA process and new Parkland Dedication processes responding to Bill 109 and Lean Review - detailed process maps are available for a breakdown if needed. This is a large project with many subcomponents
- Update Pre-Consultation checklist form to support new processes responding to Bill 109 such as list of studies required and where to find ToRs on website - additional studies and references to other processes such as new Municipal Services and Parkland Dedication processes.
- Updated Site Plan, OPA, ZBA, and subdivision online webpages to reflect Bill 109 processes
- Updated and modernized Development Notice Sign and Public Meeting Decal templates, in which templates are now available online for Applicants to draft the development sign

- Pre-Application Consultation are now standing meetings to block off time from Staff's calendars, and to provide re-usable meeting links for scheduling PAC meetings more quickly
- Project Review template now available in AMANDA for more convenient access and editing
- Prepare internal guides for Urban Design Staff to guide development application review, including Age-Friendly design guideline prioritization and Pre-Application Consultation checklist requirements
- Develop new Sustainability Metrics implementation and staff training sessions
- Urban design prepared template and picklist of comments for applications, relating to site plan and OPA/ZBA applications.
- Develop new Tree Permit process responding to Bill 109 and new Tree Preservation Bylaw update. Includes review fee structure.

Engineering

- Streamlined and clarified the process when business owners request to upsize or replace their service connections so as to not require them to go through the site plan review process. Clarifies roles and responsibilities between Engineering and Waterworks.
- Clarified the roles and responsibilities between groups within the Engineering Department regarding the review and acceptance of photometric/streetlighting assessments.
- Clarified roles and responsibilities between groups within the Engineering Department regarding the review and acceptance of traffic control signal design.
- Review of municipal stormwater management facilities added to Transfer of Review Agreement with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) to minimize delays to approval and construction. Previous process involves developers making direct submissions to MECP for stormwater management facilities (e.g. storm water management ponds, underground storage tanks) which can take many months.
- Streamlined and clarified what type of works can be reviewed and approved under the site alteration review process and to clarify the roles and responsibilities between groups within the Development Services Commission regarding the review and acceptance
- Delegation of authority to Director of Engineering for acceptance for maintenance and assumption of subdivision which eliminates the need for a staff report to Council so that the process can take place when a subdivision meets all conditions
- Delegation of authority to Director of Engineering to sign applications for Toronto & Region Conservation Authority and Provincial Ministry permits for the City's capital projects rather than request Council's authority
- Updated "Development Application Procedure" Manual to reflect new processes associated with ePLAN for Development Engineering review process.
- Provided standard engineering conditions in new standardized site plan agreement template

- Updated City's Engineering Design Criteria and Drawings
- Amended City's By-Law 2005-104 (A By-law to Prohibit the Use of Land or the Erection or Use of Buildings or Structures Unless Municipal Services Are Available) to provide clarity on the definition of the availability of services and to expand the limit of the By-law to include Future Urban Area lands
- Amended By-law 2011-232 (Site Alteration By-Law) to provide clarity on types of applications that would be accepted for site alteration under the By-law
- Residential infill grading service (RGS) circulation – Development Technician ensures submission standards are met while RGS group determines if submission can be circulated because of requirements by the Tree Preservation group and Waterworks
- Review cycle tasks shared between staff within a group so staff can decide who performs the review. Completed for System Engineer group and Tree Preservation group.
- Notification of construction works commencement and information posted on City website (e.g. earth moving, infrastructure, etc)
- Pre-consultation checklist form for applicants of Engineering technical drawings for subdivision applications to ensure applicants provide the necessary documents to assist in the review and approval of drawings
- ePLAN folder structure revised to allow for more organized file uploads by moving the Streetlighting file folder from Modeling to its own folder within the Drawings folder
- New Municipal Services processes responding to Bill 109 and Lean Review since external Engineering works is removed from Site Plan process in order to complete 60 day approval period - detailed process maps are available for a breakdown if needed. This is a large project with many subcomponents including intake, circulation agreement, application checklist, etc.
- Consolidation of various study Terms of References to support Development Applications and new processes responding to Bill 109

Building Standards

- Created a new pre-permit code consultation service that provides applicants the ability to obtain high level code review prior to site plan endorsement
- Created a new online inspection portal that provide applicants and owners a simple one step online method for booking inspections
- Created an online bill payment feature that provides applicants and owners a simple one step online method of paying any fee collected by building standards
- Create a new publishing feature in ePLAN making comments more efficient and accurate
- Converted existing Pre Permit Consultation folder to ePLAN folder and implemented new fee for permit pre consultations
- 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 the review of interior tenant fit up permits to support economic growth of small businesses
- Streamlined and approved alternative compliance solutions for small business tent approvals for restaurants during COVID restrictions
- Overhauled and streamlined Appointment By-Law gaining efficiencies and eliminating the reliance council reports and approvals for routine for staffing changes
- Implemented Building Bylaw changes to reduce issues surrounding infill housing construction, ie increase in building permit fee, maintenance fee for Inactive Orders, maintenance fee for infill projects exceeding 24 months
- Created and implemented new remote video inspections processes and procedures
- Streamlined internal circulation notice to planning and engineering to facilitate conditional permit clearances
- Upgraded to ePLAN Project Dox 9.1
- Created new sub types to capture production housing with purpose built accessory dwelling units
- 7 Builder Tips issued to the development community clarifying code issues
- Streamline infill housing demolition applications with the associated new housing permit
- Hybrid Plans Examiners pilot project
- Working group developed strategy to improve infield use of technology, streamline processes and eliminate manual paper based processes
- ePLAN Project Dox upgrade to 9.2
- Initiated testing of new Inspection Mobile App
- Published 2 Building Tips; Second Suite Sprinkler and Water Service
- Standard Practice PR-22-005 Site Servicing Reviews
- Standard Practice PR-22-006 High Buildings
- Created circulation notice for conditional permit expiry/extension
- Conditional Permit Training for the Planning Department
- Outreach Presentation with the Small Business Centre: Navigating the City of Markham Zoning and Building Permit Processes
- Building Standards Quality Assurance Program
- Finance - High Density Forecasting
- Implemented new fees for Partial Occupancy of Unfinished Building Certificates of Occupancy
- Notification for Workflow Changes - Owner Notifications
- New ePLAN Portal Upgrade
- Amanda 7 Update
- Remote Inspection App Launched
- Year 1 - Residential Infill Housing Program
- Sign & Heritage District Webinar
- ePLAN Project Dox 9.3 Cloud Conversion