



City of Kitchener's

Streamlining Development Approvals Funding: Final Report

November 1, 2023

Acknowledgement

The City of Kitchener acknowledges the \$1,000,000 Streamlining Development Approvals Funding grant provided by the Province of Ontario to undertake the work program summarized in this report. The views expressed in this report are those of the City of Kitchener and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.

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Introduction

Kitchener is changing, growing, and adapting at a record rate. According to a report released by Statistics Canada, Kitchener had the third highest growth rate (10.1%) of the 25 largest municipalities in Canada between 2016 - 2021, and forecasts predict continued growth. Throughout the city, Kitchener issued building permits with a construction value averaging close to \$1 billion per year, based on data over the past 5 years. This includes 18 projects in Downtown Kitchener that are transforming the skyline and will more than double the downtown core's population once they are all complete. As a result, City staff has had to sustain a high level of demand in terms of processing development approvals within provincial timelines with the commitment of supporting the development of 35,000 homes by 2031. Since March 2023, the City of Kitchener has approved over 10,000 new homes. All of these approvals have been within the Province's Bill 109 timelines.

Over the past five years, leaders at the City have responded by looking at how the City's development functions interact and are working to improve development review and approvals, resulting in clearer accountability, stronger collaboration, and ultimately a better customer experience. In 2022, the Province of Ontario granted the City of Kitchener \$1,000,000 for the purpose of streamlining the City's development approval processes and addressing backlogs. The City's objective with the eight Streamlining Development Approvals Fund (SDAF) projects was to gain momentum from the existing continuous improvement work that we have already undertaken. Together with what we've heard from our stakeholders through in-depth interviews and engagement, as well as the findings of several Lean reviews completed between 2019 and 2021, the City leveraged this knowledge to undertake several additional process reviews and housing studies, clear development review backlogs, improve digital review and online service delivery capacity; ultimately, to further streamline development approvals and bring housing units to market quicker.

There were eight projects undertaken by the City of Kitchener using the SDAF funding with specific objectives and outcomes as detailed in this report ranging from digital improvements, housing, process and financial studies, and additional temporary staff to relieve development review backlogs.

Key Outcomes

Leveraging the SDAF funding, Kitchener made significant progress in alleviating development review backlogs and streamlining processes. Here are some highlights of the outcomes of various projects:

- Overall, process improvements implemented are estimated to save staff 7000 hours per year cumulatively across the organization. Beyond staff time, this work has led to time and cost-savings for developers to help to bring housing to market quicker through consistency and transparency in development review.
- The foundational work for a public portal for development applications and online payments was established with the launch of the building permit applications in November 2022. Planning applications, starting with pre-submission consultations, are expected to launch early next year.

Once all initiated digital improvements are in place, they are expected to make up for the most significant time savings, estimated at 5,660 hours of staff time saved across the corporation per year.

- Temporary staff have provided much relief to the development review backlog supporting over 200 development applications and 39 site inspections – saving other staff close to 1600 hours of time to focus on more complex development applications. This has supported:
 - 1370+ housing units through their development approvals;
 - \$2.176 million returned site securities that can be used for future development; and,
 - Increased capacity allowed other staff to meet provincial timelines for all Official Plan amendments, Zoning Bylaw amendments and site plan approvals in 2023.
- The streamlined Consolidated Linear Infrastructure Permissions Approach for Environmental Compliance Approvals (CLI-ECA) led by the City's Stormwater and Sanitary Utilities team has compressed the approvals timeframe to 4 to 8 weeks compared to the previous Ministry-led approach, which took 6 to 12+ months for approvals.
- Enabling Missing Middle and Affordable Housing highlighted the importance of minimizing time and cost barriers to building housing which strongly aligns with the efforts through these SDAF project initiatives planned or underway such as the existing concierge service to navigate affordable housing through development review and the future expansion of the public portal for all planning applications. Recommendations in the report to expand as-of-right zoning permissions will reduce the number of applications needed to get shovels in the ground as new zoning is enacted in 2024 and beyond.
- Streamlining the Parks division's role in subdivisions will not only support bringing housing to market quicker but will foster complete communities through valued park space.
- Kitchener's new development meeting booking system saves applicant teams time and sets clear expectations to support their project planning.
- Mobile technology to support inspections is expected to save staff across several teams over 500 hours annually.

Projects Undertaken

The eight projects undertaken through the SDAF initiative include the following:

1. Digital Improvements and Online Public Portal Development
2. Temporary Positions to Clear Development Review Backlog
3. Third Party Process Review for Parks
4. Inclusionary Zoning for Affordable Housing – Policy and Implementation Guidelines
5. Enabling Missing Middle and Affordable Housing Study
6. Cumulative Impact Analysis
7. Online Booking System
8. Mobile Technology for Onsite Inspections

Each of these projects are detailed in the following sections that identify key deliverables, outcomes and efficiencies gained.

Project 1. Digital Improvements & Online Public Portal Development

The objective of this project was to improve the efficiency of AMANDA software, improve workflow, and develop a new, online public portal for development applications. Various initiatives undertaken to improve the efficiency of AMANDA software with respect to processing development applications, including:

- upgrade to AMANDA 7 software,
- identify and streamline existing development review process inefficiencies in AMANDA, and
- the development of a new, public-facing portal for applicants.

This aligns with the Province's eligible projects:

- #2 – Online “Manage My Application” systems that provide for online status checking, interaction between the 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; and
- #6 - Purchasing data/application management/workflow software, digital drawing software, or 3D tools to assist with design and visualization of development applications.

Short-term consulting services were procured with an external consultant specializing in AMANDA to help scope and prioritize improvements to focus on with the SDAF funding to oversee the digital improvements. To ensure success of the project, a temporary project manager was subsequently hired to coordinate this body of work which involved both City staff and external consultants.

Streamlining development approvals was the major goal of the portal and digital improvements based on the AMANDA software product. Common pain points across development review functions were addressed in the project including:

- Clarity of requirements for both building permit and planning applications to reduce delays caused by inadequate submission materials;
- A “one window” (portal) approach to submissions, payments, application status and retrieving approval packages to improve customer experience while saving staff time;
- Designing folders to include data such as timelines to improve transparency; and,
- Creating efficiencies through automation for administrative functions to save staff time and, ultimately, getting applicants their approvals quicker.

We have worked hard to implement components of this project as soon as they were developed and tested, rather than the ‘Big-Bang’ approach, which would delay all new functionality until project completion. For example, updates to the Building Permit portal launched in November 2022 allowing applicants to submit their application for most permit types, pay for their permit, view in real-time the permit progress and download the issued permit and associated drawings. Some components are still in the test phase and will be implemented very soon. With this methodology some efficiencies have already been achieved while others will be achieved incrementally as AMANDA folder development is completed.

Measures and actions achieved

The following table summarizes key digital improvements undertaken, highlighting key streamlining components.

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
<p><u>AMANDA 7 Upgrade.</u> Foundational to the extensive automation work in AMANDA, was upgrading to the most recent version of AMANDA which was launched in November, 2022. This was a major upgrade that has taken other similar-sized municipalities well over a year to accomplish. Kitchener was able to do this upgrade within 6 months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Single Sign-on.</u> Many development review staff sign into AMANDA several times per day which had required a username and password each time. This small improvement has a cumulative savings in time. • <u>Batch upload and download.</u> This functionality solves a time-consuming pain point where staff previously needed to upload and download drawings and documents one at a time with 10 to 20 documents for a single application. Batch upload and download allows user to highlight any number of documents/drawings and download them with one click for easier document transfer to Bluebeam. • <u>Team assignment of workflow processes.</u> When tasks are assigned to a person and that person is away from the office for any reason those tasks can be delayed as they are not visible to the entire team. Using 'Team' assignment makes workflow tasks available to the whole team reducing the impact of one person being away. • <u>Email templates</u> within AMANDA save staff time with standard responses that can be edited and saved for transparency and tracking by the whole team. • <u>Page customization</u> functionality makes applications much more user-friendly, enabling faster onboarding of new staff.
<p><u>Building Permit folder updates.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Expanded and updated portal</u> which now includes functionality for ICI projects to pay online, monitor the application and download the approved permit documents. Full functionality including applying for a permit is available for other building permit types. • <u>Consolidated permit folders.</u> The re-designed folders reduced permit types from 22 to 6 to reduce applicant errors selecting the permit type and workflow required to issue the permits. This is anticipated to significantly reduce the time required for re-work for an incorrect folder type selection by applicants. • <u>Auto-issuance of permits</u> was a key to reduce processing time, as it prevents any lag time between the completion of all reviews and payments and the issuance of the actual permit.
<p><u>Automation for visibility of approved plans and documents in the portal.</u> New back-office configuration: Changing attachment types automatically to make them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a pain point with the portal resulting from applicants having access to any uploaded plan. This meant that approved drawings could only be uploaded once the permit was issued or planning application approved, creating an additional step to the issuance process that could be missed or cause delay. Logic has now been integrated to

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
available on the portal at the right time	<p>allow staff to upload the approved drawings when they complete their review with an attachment type that is not available for viewing on the portal. Upon issuance or approval, the system automatically changes the attachment type to make it available for view and download on the portal automatically.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builders can now download their building permits, supporting information brochures and approved drawings from the portal allowing them to have access to these documents as soon as the permit is issued.
<p><u>Payment options:</u> Portal online payment system for Building Permits and Planning Applications and AMANDA Trust Account. As of November 2022, portal users are now able to pay for their building permit applications online, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per transaction with Planning applications to follow as folders are ready for the portal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>The online payment system</u> for building permits allows applicants to pay their application fees (up to a value of \$5,000) online. Previously there was delay receiving payments prior to issuance of permits with applicants paying by cheque or coming to City Hall for payment. Online payments for Planning applications will be implemented as Planning applications are integrated on the public portal over the next couple years. <u>The Trust Account module</u> implementation will continue with to objective to launch in 2024 which will allow large builders and developers to pay for large dollar permits from money that they have deposited in advance with the City.
<p><u>Pre-Submission Consultation folder</u> updates in preparation for public portal. This folder was recently completed in October 2023. The next phase will be to make the folder available in the portal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Auto-compilation of comments</u> from reviewers was a key improvement. Previously, compiling the record of consultation took planners a great deal of time to compile with reviewers emailing comments in various formats. Now, each reviewer generates and edits their standard comments document through AMANDA, and those documents are auto-compiled into the final record going to the applicant, saving both reviewers and the planner a great deal of time. <u>Complete submission requirements.</u> An extensive list of planning application submission requirements was developed as a checklist. The submission requirements are pulled directly into the auto-generated record to provide applicants with a clear list of submission requirements. This same list of requirements will be available on the portal when the applicant submits their formal planning application to provide prompts for a complete submission. The formal planning applications will also be auto-created when the applicant is ready to proceed. Using the online portal, applicants will be able to upload their submission materials allowing application circulation and review to commence quicker.
<p>Implementation of the <u>AMANDA Collaboration Module</u> is underway and expected to be completed by early 2024.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>External reviewers</u>, such as the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and the Grand River Conservation Authority, who comment on Planning applications will be able to provide

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
	<p>their comments directly into AMANDA, access application material and clear conditions of approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This eliminates emailing large files and waiting for an email response from the commenting agencies, saving time for the customer and effort by City staff to follow up and sign-off on Regional conditions which can delay responses. Their comments will also be integrated into the auto-compiled records.
<u>Preliminary modifications to the Site Plan folder to address provincial legislation changes were completed in February 2023.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Timeline tracking</u> information has been incorporated into Site plans folders. Automated update of this information is used to indicate whether the City is meeting the timelines for conditional site plan approval. This supports City staff to identify applications that are at risk of exceeding the timeframe associated with mandated refunds. Staff can use this information to prioritize these applications and support timely conditional approvals.
<u>Improved tracking of information for Individuals and Organizations was completed in February 2023</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People records in AMANDA are now broken down into three distinct types: Individual, Organization Contact and Organization. Colour-coded fields by type make it easier for staff to accurately add information for each record. Organization contacts (such as a planning consultant) can also be added as 'Members' to an 'Organization'. With this linkage, there is clarity about who is representing each organization allowing access to appropriate application folders for various portal users. This is incorporated into our Portal Registration so that Organizations can manage their own members via the portal improving digital security and transparency for those accessing development application information. (e.g., when an organization contact leaves an organization, their administrator can remove them from membership in the organization so that they cannot log in and access the organization's records.)

Observed and estimated time and cost savings

Improvement	Observed or estimated savings
AMANDA 7 Upgrades	Estimated time savings to include single sign-on, batch upload/download, page customizations, email templates and other improvements associated with AMANDA 7 upgrades are estimated to save development review staff across City teams approximately 5000 hours of time saved per year.
Building Permit folder upgrades	With the various improvements to building permit folders - avoiding rework for incorrect permit applications, auto-generated permits and reduced time coordinating with applicants for status updates and to

Improvement	Observed or estimated savings
	access approved plans are estimated at 380 hours of time saved per year.
Payment options	Online payments for building permits save approximately 110 hours of staff time annually recording payments in addition to the time saved for the applicant to achieve the requirements for issuance of a building permit.
Pre-Submission folder upgrades	With various folder improvements that provides access to information across teams (including agencies through the collaboration module), generated comment templates and auto-collation of comments, it is estimated that folder upgrades will save staff 170 hours per year.

There are many other staff time savings that have been achieved already with this project and more will occur as all development application folder updates in AMANDA are completed. This is a significant body of work that will be on-going for the next few years. The total estimated time savings as noted above, collectively, could add up to approximately 5,660 hours of staff time across all development review staff over the course of one year. Many of the time-saving elements are difficult to quantify such as the time spent discussing requirements and status with applicants that may be reduced by the online presence of building and planning applications. With just the estimates listed above, it is evident that substantial staff time savings justifies that investment in digital improvements which will continue to be enhanced in the coming years.

Project 2. Temporary Positions to Clear Development Review Backlog

There were temporary staff hired in the following four divisions for the purpose of relieving backlogs. This aligns with the Province's eligible projects #9 - hiring temporary staff to deal with backlogs related to development approvals. Kitchener employed staff in the following temporary staff positions:

- Gas – Utilities Drafting Technician
- Sanitary and Stormwater - Utilities Engineering Technologist
- Planning – Planning and Landscape Architecture co-op students
- Parks Design and Development – Landscape Architecture co-op student

2A. Gas Utilities Drafting Technician

A temporary full-time drafting technician was hired by the gas engineering team for 12 months with SDAF funding. The technician supported development review activities, including drafting, planning, and designing utilities details to support development application review and approval. Responsibilities included utilities review and comments on site plan applications, collaborating with various stakeholders on development approvals, and assisting with construction scheduling with developers and their contractors to bring housing to market faster. Key objectives of this position were:

- To clear the current development application backlog by providing new gas infrastructure designs for new subdivisions. This position helped in planning, reviewing, and supporting AutoCAD design work to reduce the backlog and eliminate conflicts and rework required throughout the process.

- Streamline the design and review process for new gas infrastructure projects. This deliverable aimed to enhance and bring efficiency to the process. New gas design requires multiple steps, reviews, and approvals, and uses many tools and templates. This project aimed to revise these processes and create new tools and templates to reduce the time and effort required to complete each task and enhance the process efficiency.

The project achieved its objectives by eliminating backlog and enhancing the new development gas design process to improve customers' experience and create efficiencies for future projects.

NO.	QTY	DESCRIPTION
PROPOSED GAS MAIN INSTALLATION		
STAUFFER WOODS		

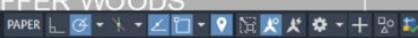
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Figure 1. Example of AutoCAD Bill of Materials Automation

Measures and actions achieved

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
Assisted with <u>clearing infrastructure design backlog</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed detailed infrastructure design drawings for 35+ projects. • Assisted with developing internal process for paperless design/review/for construction drawings.
<u>AutoCAD automation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed automated Bill of Materials process for AutoCAD drawings, reducing manual drafting time taken to complete this step and increasing accuracy (Figure 1).
Responded to inquiries for infrastructure mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responded to daily inquiries from consultants, utilities and others for infrastructure mapping. • Developed process in conjunction with the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) division to streamline mapping data requests and responses.
Developed <u>documentation for future staff onboarding</u> related to design drawing development and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed draft CAD standards manual to assist with future on-boarding of other staff and for reference by existing staff.

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
Assisted with initial development stages of a <u>document management system</u> (SharePoint)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigated future document structure needs and document management system capabilities.

Estimated one-time staff time/cost savings

The technician completed detailed infrastructure design drawings for 35+ projects to address the backlog of development applications.

Improvement	Observed or estimated savings
Design backlog	534 hours of staff capacity during temporary contract
Infrastructure Mapping Inquiries	188 hours of staff capacity during temporary contract
AutoCAD Bill of Materials Automation ¹	552 estimated annual hours avoided
Paperless Design/Review Process	232 estimated annual hours avoided
CAD Standards/On-Boarding Manual ²	40 estimated annual hours avoided
Total hours saved by the gas engineering team during the temporary contract	722 hours
Total hours saved with improvements	824 hours per year

¹For initial drawing, does not include estimated saving for revisions

² When new staff are hired

The work of the drafting technician resulted in more than 722 hours as one-time savings by clearing the backlog of applications. The project also streamlined the process and improved efficiency. These improvements are expected to result in more than 824 hours per year in avoided time annually.

2B. Sanitary and Stormwater Utilities (SSU) - Utilities Engineering Technologist

A temporary full-time Utilities Engineering Technologist was hired by the Sanitary and Stormwater Utilities (SSU) division for approximately 10 months. The technologist played an important role in providing technical engineering services through collaboration with the public, external agencies, and various City divisions. Their involvement expedited land development and infrastructure project reviews, approvals, and on-site technical inspections that potentially accelerated timelines related to housing market initiatives.

In addition to provincial eligible project #9 (hiring temporary staff to deal with backlogs), this project also aligned with:

- #4 – Implementing online application guides to help applicants select a location, identify development type, and follow a step-by-step guide to determine application submission requirements.

Key objectives of this position were:

- To evaluate projects and conduct on-site inspections to ensure new sanitary and stormwater infrastructure aligned with municipal and regional standards for future City ownership as well as internal operational efficiency and the long-term financial sustainability.

- To establish new processes in alignment with Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) recent implementation of a streamlined Consolidated Linear Infrastructure Permissions Approach for Environmental Compliance Approvals (CLI-ECA). The main requirement of the CLI-ECA focuses on expediting low-risk sanitary collection and stormwater management projects, resonating with the project's broader goal of ensuring accelerated infrastructure development.

The CLI-ECA approach introduced an efficient approval process for low-risk projects and provided clear, transparent, and consistent requirements to obtain an ECA, which can be administered directly by a municipality. As of September 2022, the City has delegated authority and responsibility for receiving, reviewing, and approving all sanitary and stormwater works for City-led and developer-led applications. To implement the new CLI-ECA requirements, the City established a new business process that required resources to address this new responsibility. The technologist's role supports the review and assessment of CLI-ECA applications to ensure adherence to design criteria and MECP approved conditions.

Measures and actions achieved

The existing MECP process typically could range from six (6) to 12 months depending on the details and complexity of the development project. The City saw an average waiting period surpassing eight (8) months per submission (simple or complex submissions). The MECP had often indicated that a typical service standard for complex applications would range around one year for potential approval. The integration of the technologist into the new CLI-ECA process generated a variety substantial benefits and technical contributions, including the following:

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
Structured CLI-ECA Fee Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A CLI-ECA fee structure was developed based on a detailed review of current local municipal comparators as well as analysis of the typical types of submission for previous ECA approvals. Furthermore, the development of a CLI-ECA fee structure was based on consultation and engagement with members of the Kitchener Development Liaison Committee which included members of the local development community consultants and representatives including home builders.
Streamlined CLI-ECA Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with internal City stakeholders, the Technologist supported the development of a new business and intake process for future CLI-ECA applications. This process development ensured an efficient and consistent approach to managing CLI-ECA applications.
Enhanced Visibility for Customer Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging their expertise, the technologist supported the creation of a dedicated City webpage. This landing page offered easy access for applicants to view background information, City submittal requirements, and provided a consistent contact for the direction of inquiries.
Consistent Review Process Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through a review of municipal comparators, the technologist established a Level of Service standard for CLI-ECA reviews

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
	<p>and approvals with direction to provide consistency for all submissions, while ensuring comprehensive and quality reviews to meet defined City benchmarks. The City established the following timelines for CLI-ECA approvals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20 to 30 business days (4 to 6 weeks) – sanitary and stormwater sewers ○ 40 business days (8 weeks) – stormwater management facilities
Clear Performance Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The technologist initiated the development of the Ministry mandatory annual performance and compliance report (Annual Report) for the municipal sanitary collection and stormwater managements systems. This commitment underscores the City's dedication to accountability for the eventual submission of the Annual Performance Reports in the first quarter of 2024, which will detail a list of all approved CLI-ECA applications.
Dedicated Engineering Oversight and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The technologist's role included administration oversight, detailed engineering review and endorsement of all CLI-ECA submissions related to City reconstruction projects or developer-led development initiatives. The technologist's approach was to ensure that all applications would meet municipal standards, legislative requirements, and industry best practices for compliance with the MECP conditions.
Evaluation of Asset Information (planned project identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As part of the final acceptance process related to land development initiatives, developers will provide the final as-built information into a digital submission attribute file that will be updated into the City's GIS asset database. The technologist identified inconsistencies in previous as-built information from historical submissions which often related to incorrect pipe materials, inconsistent naming conventions, and missing details. The technologist recommended the need to initiate a future project to ensure that the City receives accurate and uniform attribute data which will lead to long-term efficiency gains. This improvement project may result in expedited land development reviews and approvals as the City will be able to provide more precise and relevant information to future land development inquiries.

The Technologist's addition was pivotal in the establishment of a City CLI-ECA review and approval framework, which was strategic for the land development community to help facilitate a more effective process for ECA process aligned with new subdivisions submissions within Kitchener. This work aligned with the City's commitment to provide effective municipal planning.

Observed and estimated time and cost savings

The integration of the technologist, coupled with the implementation of the CLI-ECA provided the following benefits:

Improvement	Observed or estimated savings
Accelerated Approvals and Reduced Wait times	With the Technologist's involvement, the City has implemented significant time savings of approximately <u>4 to 8 weeks (about 1-2 months) for approvals</u> (depending on the type and complexity of the application). This is a dramatic shift from the Ministry-led approach, which often took 6 to 12+ months for approvals. The consistent timelines will avoid unnecessary developer delays and associated costs while allowing housing projects to be built in a more proactive manner.
Enhanced Construction Planning	The reliability of a set and consistent CLI ECA approval timeline <u>allows developers to proactively plan construction activities more effectively</u> . This would potentially allow for an early issuance of tenders for related construction bidding, resulting in more favorable pricing outcomes for developers.

The following are two examples of the new City process supported by the technologist:

- Completed Example #1:
 - Project Location - 97 Victoria Street North, SP22/167/V/CD. This is a site plan application to create 44 supportive, affordable housing units by The Working Centre.
 - Project Description – Extensions of stormwater sewer along Heit Lane, which include a CLI ECA Stormwater Sewer Application
 - CLI ECA Application Review and Approval – Approximately 4 weeks (July 2023).
- Ongoing Example #2:
 - Project Location - Stauffer Woods Subdivision (30T-08203) - Phase 2, Stage 5. Greenfield residential housing development.
 - Project Description – Extensions of sanitary and stormwater sewers, including stormwater management facilities, which included a CLI ECA Stormwater and Sanitary Sewer Application.
 - CLI ECA Application Review and Approval – Anticipated 8 weeks (September to October 2023).

The technologist's involvement led to a range of contributions including implementing processes, providing regulatory compliance, and ensuring accountability related to land development projects. Within the CLI-ECA framework, the City will be able to drastically reduce wait times which has significant benefits for Kitchener and developers. The City's ownership of the process ensures decision-making is

aligned with local priorities, fostering responsive approvals that mirror Kitchener's unique development and community strategies.

2C. Planning co-op students

Two additional co-op students were hired by the Planning division over 13 months to assist in expediting development approvals. There were two undergraduate student placements throughout the 13-month period recruited through the co-operative education program at the University of Waterloo and the University of Guelph. Key objectives of these positions were:

- To assist professional planning staff to increase their capacity to focus on development applications which proposed more housing.
- To undertake site plan inspections to release performance securities to free up developers' funds for new development projects and support professional planning staff (urban designers) to reduce backlogs by processing more development applications, particularly site plans.

Students are more easily retained through a recruitment process – we used funding to temporarily increase our staffing complement during a time when recruitment for professional Planning staff was challenging.

The students were mainly responsible for assisting with development applications for new housing with responsibilities such as:

- Supporting Planners and Senior Planners, by assisting with the processing of development applications including corresponding with applicants to ensure an application is complete, organizing and preparing circulation materials, collecting and coordinating comments, and updating processes in AMANDA.
- Managing their own development applications including private street naming requests, demolition control applications, consent applications, accessory dwelling unit applications (backyard homes), and minor variance applications. These applications were often combined with more complex applications, such as a site plan application, which the students would also support.

During an eight-month period, Kitchener employed University of Guelph Landscape Architecture students (2, 4-month placements) whose main responsibility was conducting site inspections to facilitate the return of financial securities. The goals of this specific role were to return financial securities back to the private sector to reinvest into new housing development projects and new development applications reducing the overall securities held by the City, and to free up capacity for urban design staff to process development applications.

Measures and actions achieved

The co-op students processed the following number of development applications to alleviate development application backlogs, freeing up time for planners, senior planners, and urban designers to focus on more complex development applications:

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
Demolition Control Applications	Processed 70 applications <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Total number of units demolished – 85 units

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Total number of new development units the demo control approvals supported (including major redevelopment of sites) - 582 units
Accessory Dwelling Units	Processed 23 applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Total number of new units approved – 25 units
Minor Variance & Consent Applications	Processed 66 applications
Private Street Naming Requests	Processed 6 applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Total number of new units these approvals supported – 763 units
Site Plan site inspections	Inspected 29 sites

Observed and estimated time and cost savings

The planning co-op students dealt with development application backlogs and freed up the following time that allowed planners and senior planners to process more complex development applications:

Application type	Observed or estimated savings
Demolition Control	297.5 hours
Accessory Dwelling Units	115 hours
Minor Variance & Consent Applications	396 hours
Private Street Naming Request	24 hours
Total estimated time savings for planners	832.5 hours
Total number of applications	165 applications
Total number of housing units supported	1370+ units

The landscape architecture co-op students dealt with development inspection backlogs and freed up the following time that allowed urban designers to process more complex development applications:

Application type	Observed or estimated savings
Development sites inspected	116 hours
Total time saved for urban designers	116 hours
Total number of sites inspected	29 sites
Total value of securities returned	\$2.176 million returned

2D. Parks Design and Development co-op student

A co-op student was hired by the Parks Design and Development division for 9 months (initially full-time for 4 months, then part-time for the duration) to assist in expediting development approvals. The key objective of this position was to support inspections and track applications, inspections, and acceptances. This allowed staff to focus on application review and expediency while the co-op student coordinated, conducted, and documented inspections of new park spaces, street trees and natural areas associated with new subdivisions. Over the student's contract, they grew their skills and understanding of the development process and increased the capacity of the Parks' development review team. The team consists of two landscape architects and one planner who review all development applications and

provide comments relating to parkland, natural areas, street trees, trails, and stormwater ponds for site plans, plans of subdivision as well as other development applications.

Measures and actions achieved

With the co-op student, Parks staff were able to prioritize reviewing development applications in their prescribed timelines. Reviewers were able to focus on providing comments and reviews for applications with less disruption in the schedules associated with inspections. The co-op student was able to conduct inspections, with training and support from the reviewers. The co-op student produced all minutes from site meetings and inspections, site notes and acceptance letters.

Observed and estimated time and cost savings

During the time of the co-op student, all inspection requests were scheduled with no need for staff to work overtime during the busy inspection season. As the co-op student had the capacity and skills to create notes, minutes, and acceptance letters directly after the inspection, applicants received their paperwork and acceptances quicker. The co-op student was also able to do a preliminary check of sites prior to the formal inspections, to ensure they were ready, reducing the number of inspections that the application team had to attend. The addition of the co-op position created a more efficient inspection process leading to a quicker turn-around for inspections. Inspection reports were received 3 days faster with the support of the co-op student. Inspections conducted by the co-op student and the associated reports saved the 2 reviewers about 15 hours each, across 10 different files.

Application type	Observed or estimated savings
Development sites inspected	116 hours
Total time saved for parks planners and landscape architects	30 hours
Total number of sites inspected	10 sites
Time savings for applicants to receive inspection reports with co-op student	3 days per inspection

Project 3. Third Party Process Review – Parks

A Lean review was conducted by the consultant KPMG to identify efficiencies and streamline processes for the parks development review processes associated with plans of subdivision. KPMG reviewed current practices, met with staff across multiple divisions to understand challenges, pain points and areas of delay, and made recommendations on how to streamline the review process to ensure a more efficient development review process moving forward. Key objectives of this review were to:

- reduce redundancies and gaps;
- ensure proper coverage of key parks-related considerations during the application review; and,
- streamline the process overall to ensure application timelines are met.

This aligns with the province's eligible project # 1 - Procuring consulting resources to identify and assist the City in implementing more efficient processes for the Parks Development Approvals Process.

Through this review, KPMG provided recommendations for the Parks design and development division that identified opportunities to streamline processes along with associated timeframes to implement various recommendations.

Measures and actions achieved

The following are the recommendations, actions and timelines from the report which was completed in February 2023:

Description of Improvement	Effect of Improvement
Improve communication of park requirements during pre-submission consultation.	Staff are now providing more input in park requirements during pre-submission consultation. This was implemented immediately and saw time savings during the subdivision process, with a reduction in back-and-forth communication from applicants on parks requirements. This has saved approximately two hours per application to date.
Ensure parks comments are captured as conditions of draft plan approval.	Staff plan to implement this recommendation within the next year. Currently staff coordination has increased to ensure comments are captured at early stages of development review.
Basic park-build requirements are reviewed as part of the engineering submission.	Through coordination and continued discussion on process improvements with the Development Engineering division, this recommendation will be implemented with the next update of the Development Manual.
Improve coordination of inspections across the city.	The inspection process is currently being reviewed by staff to improve efficiencies and standardize processes. Improvements will be implemented for the 2024 inspection season. Staff created inspection checklists to start to standardize the inspection process. This has resulted in inspections being completed faster and more efficiently resulting in a time savings of 30 minutes per inspection.
Digitize subdivision application review procedures.	Parks staff are now using digital review tools including Bluebeam. This has resulted in both time and cost savings as there is no longer need to print application forms, materials, or comments. Reviews are more efficient as all comments and drawings are in the same place, meaning less coordination between files is needed. AMANDA updates for subdivision folders will be a future project across teams to support further streamlining.
Enhance staff training.	This recommendation is still being explored as to the best opportunities for staff training. All staff have taken training on digital review tools and applications. This will be evaluated further in 2024 for implementation.

Observed and estimated time and cost savings

The following are estimates of time savings from KPMG report recommendations implemented to date:

Improvement	Observed or estimated savings
Clarity in pre-submission requirements	2 hours per application
Improve coordination of inspections	25 hours per year
Time savings using digital review platforms	40 hours per year

Although recommendations will continue to be implemented over the next couple years, this Lean review has resulted in time savings from utilizing digital review tools, standardized inspection checklists and improving communications. Parks staff is committed to continue to implement all the recommendations.

Project 4. Inclusionary Zoning for Affordable Housing –Policy and Implementation Guidelines

The purpose of this project was to explore, recommend, and develop an inclusionary zoning (IZ) policy and regulatory framework and implementation program as part of a collaborative effort between the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Region of Waterloo. The preparation of directions for inclusionary zoning is being led by municipal staff and a portion of this work was completed by several consultants. Implementation of the recommendations from the directions document is occurring through internal resources and has not utilized the Streamline Development Approval funding. The SDAF portions of the Inclusionary Zoning project included:

- An editable spreadsheet of an updated financial model, prepared by the consultants, showing the model assumptions, inputs and inclusionary zoning feasibility analysis for each of Kitchener's 10 Major Transit Station Areas.
- A letter from the consultants summarizing the key changes to the financial model.
- Community and affordable housing partners engagement plan, engagement process and summary of input document prepared by retained consultants, and
- An inclusionary zoning directions document.

This aligns with the Province's eligible project # 1 - Procuring consulting resources to undertake studies to support new housing types and implement new housing incentives, and recommend improvements and changes to City processes, policies and regulations to accommodate new housing development.

Key Findings of Study

The proposed inclusionary zoning policy directions seek to balance community objectives to increase the supply of affordable housing with market feasibility to ensure continued viability of residential development. They were informed by the NBLC financial model and its update. They also reflect proposed amendments to Ontario Regulation 232/18 that set limits on the number of affordable units, minimum rents and prices and length of time that affordable units can be required. The proposed inclusionary zoning directions are based on the following:

- Moderate affordability – securing housing that is affordable to moderate income households and is not otherwise being provided by the market.
- Partner with the development community – residential development projects must be viable to deliver inclusionary zoning units.

- Minimize land market disruption – include a phasing in of incrementally more inclusionary zoning units to allow time for the market to adjust.
- Long-term sustainability – the inclusionary zoning policy should be viable without subsidies or significant incentives.
- Capture value in new density – direct some of the increased land value through development approvals, investment in the ION transit system towards affordable housing.

The proposed inclusionary zoning directions that are currently being considered by Council and the community include the following. These directions remain subject to change based on community and Council input to date.

- Level of affordability - Affordable rental units in condo buildings should not exceed 100% of average market rent and affordable rental units in purpose-built rental buildings should not exceed 30% of the median renter household income in the regional market area.
- Eligible Households - Low- and moderate-income households having a gross annual income at or below the 60th percentile of regional household income range and with a maximum income at the time of occupancy of 3.3 times the IZ unit rate would be eligible.
- Duration – units should be maintained as affordable for 25 years.
- Incentives – minimum parking rates for developments within MTSAs should be reduced or eliminated and no parking should be required for IZ units. Additional heights and densities for developments in MTSAs should be considered where appropriate.
- Offset units – required affordable units may be provided in a development located on an alternative site within an MTSAs in the same municipality.
- Administration/implementation – A centralized administration by government or single mission-aligned arm's length organization is required to ensure consistent monitoring and enforcement.
- Monitoring – Report every two years and update the housing needs assessment report every five years.
- Set aside rates – Will increase from 0-5% from 2024-2031+ and will vary based on the MTSAs depending on whether the MTSAs is within a prime, established, or emerging market area.
- Outcomes of streamlining development review systems and processes

The City will secure affordable inclusionary zoning units through the development review process. Kitchener is well positioned to ensure that developments with inclusionary zoning units move quickly through a streamlined development review process as we already have in place two dedicated project managers that provide a concierge service for affordable housing projects. The City is also developing an inclusionary zoning implementation guideline document to assist with a streamlined development review process.

Measures and actions taken / to be taken by the City

Using SDAF, in 2022 LURA Consulting was retained to develop and implement a public engagement strategy that focused on plain language communication and videos to explain the inclusionary zoning concept (Figure 2). LURA also helped plan, deliver, and facilitate digital and in-person community engagement. The goal of the engagement was to seek specific feedback on policy directions from a wide variety of perspectives. LURA, together with staff from Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and the Region of Waterloo hosted interest group sessions which were listening-based facilitated discussions both in-

person and virtual to generate dialogue from not-for-profit housing providers, the development industry, and future beneficiaries of an inclusionary zoning policy. A broad community meeting was also hosted by LURA and staff to engage on the same. Two educational videos were developed, the first including an introduction to inclusionary zoning and the second on the specifics of an inclusionary zoning framework. The videos were hosted on an [Engage WR page](#) which has been open for the duration of the inclusionary zoning project and served as the main conduit for hosting information related to inclusionary zoning. The inputs and perspectives gathered through this engagement were shared with Kitchener Council in March 2023 and were used to inform the draft directions on inclusionary zoning.



Figure 2. Video created to explain inclusionary zoning with the support of SDAF

N. Barry Lyon Consultants Limited (NBLC) was retained using SDAF to update a financial model that was previously prepared in 2019 and to provide a memorandum for how to utilize the model and interpret its results. The financial model was updated to address several key changes that have occurred since 2019. They include:

- Revenue inputs – to reflect new condominium apartment pricing in Waterloo Region.
- Cost inputs – to reflect the escalation in construction costs and construction loan interest rates, and consideration of up-to-date soft costs, including municipal fees.

Study impact

Having NBLC undertake proforma work enables Kitchener and other area municipalities in the Region of Waterloo to establish set-aside rates that are mindful of the different market conditions in each of the MTSAs, consider a phasing-in approach, and consider the appropriate threshold of development to which inclusionary zoning should apply. Staff understand that inclusionary zoning brings an additional cost to private sector developers but for much needed affordable housing. Staff understands that it is imperative to have an inclusionary zoning framework that balances the need for affordable units that are appropriately delivered through inclusionary zoning with the landowner's ability to anticipate these costs as early in the process as possible.

Project 5. Enabling Missing Middle and Affordable Housing Study

The City of Kitchener retained consultant services to provide an understanding of key market, policy, regulatory and process barriers to delivering a full range of housing types, including missing middle and affordable. This study also explored opportunities available to the City to address these barriers in order to increase housing supply and housing diversity and create more housing opportunities across the housing continuum. Specifically, this study included:

- Providing a better understanding of land economics for various forms of dwelling typologies and how the City does, can, and should influence the viability (market) and affordability of building these dwelling typologies, especially in low rise neighbourhoods and suburban nodes and corridors.
- Evaluating options for and providing recommendations on a housing incentives/subsidy program to progress the City's affordable and supportive housing objectives.
- Recommendations to improve and/or change City processes, policies, regulations, and guidelines to enable the achievement of more housing supply, particularly, missing middle and midrise housing.

The findings of this study were presented in a staff report to Kitchener's Planning and Strategic Initiatives Committee on April 24, 2023. At that meeting Council directed that staff use this study to inform updates to the Official Plan and zoning within Kitchener's Major Transit Station Areas; inform continuous improvements of development services processes; and further consideration of the financial incentives for missing middle and affordable housing once more information is understood about the definitions and regulatory framework for affordable and attainable housing.

This aligns with the Province's eligible project # 1 - Procuring consulting resources to undertake studies to support new housing types and implement new housing incentives, and recommend improvements and changes to City processes, policies and regulations to accommodate new housing development.

Key Findings of the Study

Kitchener is grappling with the challenges and opportunities associated with the delivery of missing middle and affordable housing. Kitchener is already a leader in this regard through its flexible and modern zoning framework, continuous process improvements and financial incentives for affordable housing. Kitchener is uniquely positioned to further support this type of growth based on current demographic conditions, land availability, development feasibility conditions and a common desire to make it happen among both the public and private sector. The study included four key recommendations to advance these objectives in priority order:

- **Parking reductions** – are extremely impactful to encourage the development of missing middle housing. The study recommends immediate action be taken to modernize parking standards to be more in-line with continued shifts in consumer/lifestyle preferences. This could be most impactful in areas with existing or planned transit infrastructure.
- **Increase density and height allowances** – this will lead to more diverse housing typologies in existing low-rise neighbourhoods permitted as-of-right in zoning. The study recommends increasing density permissions and height limits in low rise to 6 storeys and mid-rise to between 7 and 12 storeys. The study also recommends additional density permissions in high-rise built forms to enable affordable housing delivery.
- **Provide financial supports** – two financial incentives are recommended to be further explored including exempting applicable developments from taxes during development or beyond, and

rebating/waiving development charges and other city fees for applicable projects. Further exploration of community improvement plans, or municipal capital facility agreements should be explored.

- **Continue process improvements** – the study acknowledges that the City has made tremendous strides in development review process improvements. The study recommends that the City continue to build upon recent streamlining projects by continuing to enable a more expeditious path to building permit issuance. Improvements could include simplifying and reducing study requirements for affordable housing projects; delegating more approvals to staff such as more heritage permits and the lifting of holding provisions; building on and formalizing the City's existing affordable housing concierge function to reduce approval time for missing middle and affordable housing project; reducing and focusing public meeting requirements; and considering template-based approval systems.

Measures and actions taken / to be taken by the City

In June 2023 Council endorsed delegated approval of the lifting of holding provisions to staff and approved changes to Kitchener's community engagement policy to support engagement while meeting provincial timelines. Additionally, as-of-right zoning permissions for missing middle, including zero parking minimums, are currently being implemented through updates in zoning for 7 of Kitchener's 10 Major Transit Station Areas with an anticipated Council consideration date of January 2024. This will be followed by city-wide implementation through Kitchener's Official Plan review that will commence in 2024 and implementing zoning thereafter. Additionally, as-of-right zoning permissions for missing middle housing in a low-rise form will be considered by a committee of council in a neighbourhood near Conestoga College through implementing as-of-right zoning changes in the Lower Doon community in October 2023.

Additionally, once the City has a better understanding, through conversations with the Province on how affordable and attainable are intended to be defined, the City will be able to consider the recommended financial incentives in this study, and; the budget implications and legal mechanisms for community improvement plans and municipal capital facilities agreements.

Additionally, streamlining of Kitchener's already efficient development review process will continue including advancing all development applications for the AMANDA portal and refining the existing 'concierge service' for affordable housing projects.

Study impact

The Missing Middle and Affordable Housing Study provides an opportunity for the City to better understand market, policy, and process barriers that may be in place for the delivery of missing middle and affordable housing. Having a better understanding of the implications of policy decisions and processes on land proformas is helpful in updating rules and policies that have the potential to lead to reduced costs. A key takeaway from this study is looking at reduced or no parking requirements for missing middle and affordable housing typologies as these changes will go a long way to improving the development proforma to enable more of these housing types throughout Kitchener.

Project 6. Cumulative Impact Analysis

N. Barry Lyon Consultants was retained by the City to undertake an evaluation of impacts from proposed policy changes that have the potential to influence the financial viability of new development in the city. The findings of N. Barry Lyon Consultants (NBLC) were presented in a [staff report](#) to Kitchener's Community and Infrastructure Services Committee on June 8, 2022 and a summary is included, below.

The policies considered in this analysis included:

- A new Community Benefits Charge (CBC) equivalent to four percent of land value, replacing the negotiated process commonly referred to as a "Section 37 Agreement" in accordance with changes to the Planning Act.
- New City of Kitchener Development Charge rates (Region of Waterloo Development Charges remain unchanged).
- A Cash-in-Lieu of parkland dedication policy (CIL) which was updated to reflect a new city-wide appraisal of development land values and includes a capped payment for high-density built forms; and,
- A mandatory Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) policy which would require that five percent of the development floor area be sold or rented at below market rates.

This project aligns with the Province's eligible project # 1 - Procuring consulting resources to undertake studies to support new housing types and implement new housing incentives, and recommend improvements and changes to City processes, policies and regulations to accommodate new housing development.

The purpose of undertaking this evaluation was to understand the cumulative impact of the potential policy changes on development proformas, pace of development, and housing affordability resulting from introducing or amending various planning tools. This is an important step in understanding how the City can remove or reduce potential barriers related to development and further streamline the process to bring more housing to market quicker. While these growth-related funding tools are important to providing the services to support growth, they need to be applied carefully to prevent stalling new housing supply. This analysis examined potential impacts on land development proposals as they relate to various built forms and geographies in the city. This study provided recommendations on how to shape and implement updated City fees, without compromising the development industry's ability to deliver needed housing supply.

At the time of the preparation of this study, the City was in various stages of updating or considering growth related fees that include development charges (DCs), Community Benefits Charges (CBCs), Park Dedication and Inclusionary Zoning (IZ). The cumulative impact of these fees has the possibility of impacting development trends and housing affordability. A new Development Charges By-law and Park Dedication By-law were subsequently approved by Council in 2022.

Key Findings of the Study

It is important to note that since the NBLC study was completed, a comprehensive amendment to the Planning Act and Development Charges Act received royal assent which saw changes to, among other things, the amount of development charges that can be collected and eligible items, changes to the parameters of parkland dedication, and changes to the parameters of inclusionary zoning (not yet in

effect). The recommendations and results of the NBLC report will continue to be assessed by staff in the context of the Planning Act amendments.

Key findings from the NBLC report were:

- Funding tools in totality generally result in manageable impacts to pro formas in the strong Downtown residential market, with more significant impacts on high-rise development in other locations in Kitchener.
- The proposed (note: now in effect) DC rates will have a relatively small impact on project viability.
- Although the City has yet to determine if it will implement CBCs, a 4% land value charge (the maximum permitted in legislation) would have relatively small impacts on project viability.
- Generally, high-rise apartments, rental projects, and areas outside of Downtown are expected to be most impacted by the proposed fees.
- The overall impact of the proposed (note: now in effect but under appeal) Park Dedication By-Law could potentially push land values down by 11% in the Downtown test case and 35% in central neighbourhoods. It is acknowledged that this fee increase is a one-time adjustment to address a 12- year park dedication value stagnation. (Note: any changes to the City's Park Dedication By-law will need to align with the changes to the Planning Act).
- A test case Inclusionary Zoning policy that requires 5% of units to be affordable could further depress land values by 16% at the Downtown test site and by half in central neighbourhoods. The impact of inclusionary zoning could be mitigated through reduced affordability requirements in weaker markets and offsets such as increases in height and density permissions, reduced parking requirements, fee waivers and/or grants.
- The cumulative impacts of all new policies could impact land values by 25%-90% depending on location and built form. A transition period to the new fee/policy regime is crucial to mitigating impacts to project viability. Fees should be tailored to support higher density development in weaker market areas and reviewed regularly to respond to market conditions.

The NBLC report uses theoretical projects, based on prototypes, and the results are very sensitive to a set of assumptions. It is therefore not a good predictor of actual land transaction prices. There is less certainty regarding valuation of high-density development outside of Downtown with limited comparable data on which to rely. It does, however, remain a valuable way to evaluate the potential impact of new fees and policies.

Outcomes of streamlining development review systems and processes

This Study will be used to enable future municipal fee related considerations and as such has greater potential outcomes for cost savings rather than streamlining of review systems and processes.

Measures and actions taken / to be taken by the City

The amendments to the Planning Act addressed some of the items noted by NBLC in their work – notably the phasing in of development charges and maximum charges for both parkland dedication and inclusionary zoning. The City has implemented a new Development Charge By-law that includes a robust engagement process. Kitchener's DC rates are in effect and were not subject to appeals.

Kitchener's Parkland Dedication By-law was approved by Council in August 2022 and remains under appeal. The City will be updating the bylaw to align with changes to the Planning Act that received royal assent in November 2022.

The NBLC study was used to inform ongoing work on the City's Inclusionary Zoning framework. Draft directions were tabled at Kitchener Council in June 2023 which are consistent with the direction in the Planning Act as amended (but not in effect) in November 2022, include a recommended phasing of an inclusionary zoning framework, and are based on additional financial assessment by NBLC.

Finally, the City is in the early stages of considering the merits of a community benefits charge bylaw and will consider the results and recommendations from this NBLC study through that work.

Study Impact

The NBLC study provides an opportunity for the City to better understand potential municipal cost implications on development proformas and land values. This is a valuable understanding to have as it enables municipal staff to consider implications as rates are set and consider any offsets, such as phasing in of rates like were considered and implemented in Kitchener's Parkland Dedication By-law and draft directions on Inclusionary Zoning.

Project 7. Online Booking System for Pre-submission Consultations and Planning Meetings

The goal of this project was to provide the ability for applicants to book meetings online, allowing them to self-select meeting date/time for pre-submission consultations and other planning meetings (e.g., site plan review committee meetings).

Through a multi-year review of the City's development services (2019-2021), interest was expressed by applicants to create a more flexible, self-service online booking system for pre-submission consultation and other planning meetings. During the pandemic, capacity was created to host these meetings virtually through Microsoft Teams. Meetings have continued virtually saving travel time and expenses for applicants. Concurrent to this SDAF project, the City's corporate customer service team undertook a review of an online appointment booking system that also supports walk-in customer service requests for all city hall service counters. The SDAF project aligned closely with the implementation of the customer service review to ensure a consistent user experience across all customer meeting and appointment requests while considering the operational needs for booking planning meetings.

The project deliverable for the SDAF project is the development of an online booking system which aligns with the Province's eligible project # 5 - Implementing online booking and web meetings systems for pre-consultation and planning meetings.

Measures and actions achieved

The SDAF project team worked closely with the Corporate Customer Service team to integrate the distinct requirements of planning meeting bookings in the request for proposals for the corporate solution. The contract was awarded to FrontDesk in the summer of 2022. Since that time, Planning staff have coordinated with FrontDesk and Kitchener's Corporate Customer Service team to design, test and deliver the planning meeting interface. The appointment booking system for pre-submission

consultations went live in August 2023 to ensure the system operated as expected. Site Plan Review Committee meeting bookings subsequently went live at the beginning of October 2023 (Figure 3).

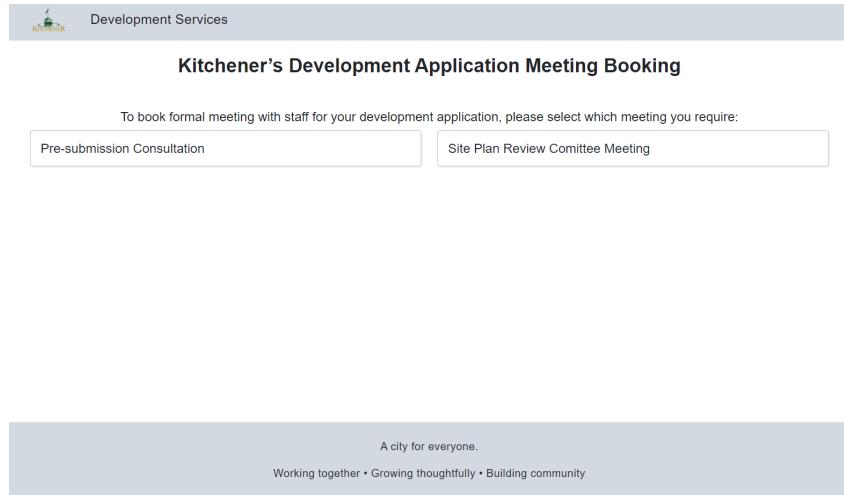


Figure 3. Kitchener's Development Application Meeting Booking landing page

As an interim step until the public portal for development applications is complete, staff email a link to applicants upon receipt of their digital submission and request that they select their preferred meeting time. The design of the system prompts applicants to select a meeting time which is then approved by staff with a generated meeting link and integration into Outlook for distribution to the staff and agency review team. The work underway through Project 1 related to updates to AMANDA folders to prepare for the public portal has been considered with this appointment booking system. Once the public portal is launched for pre-submission and site plan applications, there will be a link through the portal submission process that will lead the applicant to the appointment booking system to select a meeting time.

Observed and estimated time and cost savings

A customer satisfaction survey was sent to applicants who booked pre-submission consultation meetings through the new system to the end of September. All feedback was positive with the following comments shared:

- *“Knowing what dates/times were available is fantastic. Easy to coordinate with individuals who will attend and pick a date that works for all. Helps to have clear timelines as well, by knowing what dates are available.”*
- *“The range of options for days/times is excellent. Thank you for this initiative.”*
- *“Sets clear timeframes, allows coordination of schedules, saves time for sure.”*
- *“So easy to plan ahead”*
- *“It is a very efficient use of everyone's time to provide the options for dates/times in order for the developers' consulting team to align with available City/Agency times for meeting.”*
- *“I support this system and adoption to other applications as appropriate. The hardest part of client management is not knowing things like when a meeting date will be held. This process*

clears that up and sets realistic expectations for all involved in the process. I think it is a great process.”

- *“(Another) Great initiative by the City of Kitchener!”*

As survey responses indicate, there is a time savings on the applicant's side as they select a meeting time that best suits their schedule and that of their team. They also indicated that the booking system provides additional transparency to establish the project schedule and supports communication across the team to set realistic timeframes. Under the previous process, applicants and their team did their best to rearrange their own schedules to accommodate the scheduled meeting. Most of the time, additional time rearranging their own commitments (e.g., project owner, planner, architect, civil engineer, etc.) would be born on the applicant's team. This contributed to the recommendations from the 2019-2021 development services review recommending an appointment booking system.

From a staff perspective, the new system reduces rework associated with rescheduling meetings that the applicant's team cannot accommodate. Staff estimate this happened approximately 2% to 5% of the time. While there may be circumstances where meetings may need to be rescheduled, it is estimated that the time savings associated with this improvement would be approximately 2 to 9 staff hours per year. Additional time savings are anticipated as planning applications launch through public portal.

Project 8. Mobile Technology for Onsite Inspections

This project involved the evaluation of mobile technology needs to better support development review and inspections. It identified gaps or inefficiencies in the existing onsite inspection processes that can be streamlined/improved focusing on mobile software and hardware tools while conducting onsite inspections for site inspections during application review, construction, and post-construction to release performance securities in an expedited manner. Equipping staff with mobile software/hardware to support onsite inspections allows staff the ability to markup digital drawings and collaborate in real-time with staff and applicants. Streamlining and modernizing onsite inspections will bring new housing to the market faster. The key deliverables for this project include mobile software and hardware to support a more streamlined process for onsite inspections related to development applications.

This review was scoped to evaluate mobile technology needs and benefits for the teams across the corporation who undertake development review and inspection activities for the City of Kitchener. Planning, development engineering, and parks design and development teams identified mobile technology needs through the review as detailed in the next section.

This project aligns with the province's eligible project #6 - Purchasing data/application management/workflow software, digital drawing software, or 3D tools to assist with design and visualization of development applications.

Measures and actions achieved

Teams evaluated their need for mobile technology based on their role in site inspections both during development review and construction phases. Prior to the evaluation, staff were reviewing plans digitally with the support of Bluebeam plan review software then relying on inconsistent tools for site inspections, mainly printed plans and some standard-sized tablets. Commonly, the teams below noted the need to reduce/avoid printing documents and transferring written notes, translating existing

software use (Bluebeam) to field use for drawing mark-ups, integrating photos and notes that would be easily saved into AMANDA and shared with applicants. The following summarizes the results of the needs assessment:

Needs Assessment Results by Team	Tools purchased
<u>Planning team</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Device for co-op students conducting inspections to relieve backlog Large screen tablets with access to data for the purpose of reviewing large sized, detailed design plans at a readable scale. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iPad for co-op students iPad Pros for urban designers
<u>Development engineering team</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessing drawings quickly in the field with fewer file transfer steps between devices access to file management software (AMANDA) to check status of applications, and take notes keyboard capabilities for taking notes and quick, seamless transition to their workstation supporting technical tools for inspection measurements and pin locators to streamline inspection times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-in-1 laptop/tablet devices Laser measurement tools Spot magnetic locator
<u>Parks design and development team</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that tablets include accessories such as anti-glare screen covers, and pens to support consistent tablet use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iPad for co-op student accessories for existing devices transferred to the team (pens, anti-glare screen covers)

Observed and estimated time and cost savings:

Overall, the use of tablets for site visits and inspections had a significant impact on staff's efficiency and the ability to provide comments to applicants in a timely manner. Noted efficiencies included:

Improvement	Observed or estimated savings
Development engineering	230 hours per year
Urban designers	100 hours per year
Parks staff	200 to 240 hours per year
Total time saved by City staff across teams	530 to 570 hours per year

The development engineering team who spends a high percentage of their time conducting site inspections estimated approximately 200 hours of combined time savings over the course of a year using the 2-in-1 devices associated with accessing information, recording field notes including redlining plans, uploading notes to AMANDA and emailing to applicants. Additionally, the bar finders and laser measurement tools save field time and rework estimated at approximately 30 hours per year (Figure 5).

The urban designers were initially using existing standard iPads but through the needs assessment, larger screens and data access were determined needs to streamline their inspections. The larger

screen allows for ease of review for larger scale plans avoiding time spent zooming in and out of sections of the plan and data to seamlessly access drawings and save mark-ups in the field. The estimated time savings for inspections and site visits both during development review and post-construction at approximately 100 hours per year.

Parks staff identified significant time savings using the tablets compared to their prior method of bringing paper plans into the field. Time savings included finding and printing plans, preparing markups on the spot and uploading photos directly. Their estimated time savings at approximately 2 hours per inspection, translating to approximately 200 to 240 hours per year among all staff.

Overall, use of mobile technology through the SDAF funding is estimated to save 530 to 570 hours (about 3 and a half weeks) of staff time per year across teams. In the coming years with learning and adjustments to inspection practices, the time savings will likely expand.



Figure 5. Examples of the use of mobile technology. An engineering inspector using the Bluetooth laser measurement tool (top left), a 2-in-1 device (top right), and a bar locator (bottom left). Example markup plan with site photos using Bluebeam from a landscape inspection (bottom right).

Budget Summary

The following is a summary of funds utilized for each project. Kitchener has been able to fully utilize the grant through the eight projects.

Description	Cost (including non-reimbursed HST)
Project 1: AMANDA improvements	
Temporary staff	\$ 121,230.25
AMANDA Strategy	\$ 6,639.84
AMANDA 7 upgrades	\$ 38,137.70
Public Portal Phase 1	\$ 27,984.00
Project 1 Subtotal	\$ 192,666.26
Project 2: Temporary staffing	
Temporary staff	\$ 298,063.77
Computer setup	\$ 18,341.64
Project 2 Subtotal	\$ 316,405.41
Project 3: Parks Consultant	
Consultant services	\$ 50,691.74
Project 3 Subtotal	\$ 50,691.74
Project 4: Inclusionary Zoning	
Engagement consultant	\$ 29,987.65
Financial consultant (cost-share)	\$ 14,644.00
Project 4 Subtotal	\$ 44,631.65
Project 5: Missing Middle and Affordable Housing	
Consultant services	\$ 299,580.43
Project 5 Subtotal	\$ 299,580.43
Project 6: Cumulative Impact Analysis	
Consultant Services	\$ 64,566.72
Project 6 Subtotal	\$ 64,566.72
Project 7: Online Booking system	
FrontDesk Appointment booking software (cost-share)	\$ 9,086.35
Project 7 Subtotal	\$ 9,086.35
Project 8: Mobile Technology	
2-in-1 devices	\$ 18,559.20
iPads and iPad Pros with pens	\$ 4,916.50
Spot Magnetic Locators	\$ 2,391.36
Bluetooth Laser measurement devices	\$ 870.05
Project 8 Subtotal	\$ 26,737.11
SDAF Total	\$ 1,004,365.67

Summary of anticipated outcomes

Each project identified cost and time savings by project that affect different parts of development review processes. Key cost and time saving outcomes from these projects include:

- Overall, process improvements implemented are estimated to save staff 7000 hours per year of staff time across the corporation, cumulatively. Beyond staff time, this work has led to time and cost-savings to developers to help to bring housing to market quicker through consistency and transparency in development review.
- The SDAF projects coupled with other City-led streamlining efforts have supported all Official Plan amendments, Zoning Bylaw amendments and Site Plan applications to be processed within the regulatory timeframe such that no application refunds would be (prior to July 1st) or have been required (since July 1st).
- The foundational work for a public portal for development applications and online payments has been established with the launch of the building permit applications in November 2022. Planning applications, starting with the updated pre-submission consultation folder, are expected to launch early next year. Once all initiated digital improvements are in place, they are expected to make up for the most significant time savings, estimated at 5,660 hours of staff time saved across the corporation per year.
- Temporary staff have provided much relief to the development review backlog supporting over 200 development applications and 39 site inspections – saving other staff close to 1600 hours of time to focus on more complex development applications. This has supported:
 - 1370+ housing units through their development approvals; and
 - \$2.176 million returned site securities that can be used for future development.
 - Meeting provincial timelines for development application timing without requiring application fee refunds.
- The streamlined Consolidated Linear Infrastructure Permissions Approach for Environmental Compliance Approvals (CLI-ECA) led by the City's Stormwater and Sanitary Utilities team has compressed the approvals timeframe to 4 to 8 weeks compared to the previous the Ministry-led approach, which took 6 to 12+ months for approvals.
- Enabling Missing Middle and Affordable Housing highlighted the importance of minimizing time and cost barriers to building housing which strongly aligns with the efforts through these SDAF projects and initiatives planned or underway such as the existing concierge service to navigate affordable housing through the development review and the future expansion of the public portal for all planning applications. Recommendations in the report to expand as-of-right zoning permissions will reduce the number of applications needed to get shovels in the ground as new zoning is enacted in 2024 and beyond.
- Streamlining the Parks division's role in subdivisions will not only support bringing housing to market quicker but will foster complete communities through valued park space.
- Kitchener's new development meeting booking system saves applicant teams time and sets clear expectations to support their project planning.
- Mobile technology to support inspections is expected to save staff across teams over 500 hours annually.

Provincial reporting requirements requested an estimate of the number of development approvals processed before and after all process improvements have been implemented. It is difficult to estimate the City's projected capacity for several reasons:

- There are external factors impacting the volume of applications that are received by the City related to broader economic factors such as interest rates, supply chain disruptions, and national or global economic conditions.
- The City processes all applications received for a given year. Staffing levels also impact how quickly development applications are processed and filling vacancies in a tight labour market is a challenge. The temporary positions funded through SDAF have been discontinued unless the division was able to identify an alternative funding source to continue the contract.
- Process changes through Bill 23 along with the implementation of the Missing Middle and Affordable Housing Study have led to or may lead to fewer planning applications through as-of-right zoning permissions and the threshold for requiring site plan approval (more than 10 units).
- Concurrent to the SDAF funding initiatives, Kitchener's planning team undertook several other process improvements to streamline Official Plan and zoning bylaw amendment applications at the staff level that also support more efficient development review.
- Development review processes include multiple departments and agencies, typically working in concurrent timeframes. As such, time savings cannot be taken as a simple "sum total" of each improvement. Kitchener supports "overlap" in our review process where building permits may be submitted while site plan review is underway, for example, to get shovels in the ground as quickly as possible.

Considering the various process improvements, the SDAF improvements open staff capacity in various development review roles. Depending on their role and responsibilities, some staff may see a significant reduction in "non-value added" tasks while others may see smaller capacity gains. Customer experience improvements through the portal, on-line meeting booking tool and payments offer time savings on the applicants' side that are also critical to our collaborative relationship with the development industry. Overall, the City estimates a 10% increase in staff capacity to support a more efficient processing of development applications which is expected to grow as more planning applications transition to the public portal in the coming years and recommendations of various reports are fully implemented.

	2021 Baseline	Estimate of Increased Capacity	Estimated Development Approval Capacity
Total Building Permits	3,197	10%	3,517
Total Planning Applications	443	10%	487
Total Applications / Permits	3,640		4,004

Conclusions

Kitchener is committed to working with all orders of government, the development industry and our community to continuously improve the efficiency of our development approvals to build homes faster. We were able to fully utilize the SDAF funding to implement a series of eight projects that have and will continue to have a significant impact on streamlining Kitchener's development approvals process.

The City leveraged knowledge from stakeholder engagement, as well as the findings of several Lean reviews to undertake several process reviews and housing studies, clear development review backlogs, improve digital review and online service delivery capacity, ultimately, to further streamline development approvals and bring housing units to market quicker. We are proud of the achievements both from the City's and developer's perspective to save time and costs through development review processes. We recognize that our work is not complete. In the coming years, staff plan to continue to bring more development applications onto the public portal and to implement the findings of various SDAF funded studies. Kitchener is committed to supporting the construction of 35,000 by 2031 supported by these streamlining efforts now and in the coming years.