

## Streamline Development Approvals Fund Update

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### Report Summary

This report provides information regarding the City of Greater Sudbury’s (CGS) Streamline Development Approval Fund (SDAF) initiative, which utilized Provincial funding to modernize, streamline, and accelerate residential development approvals.

### Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report identifies projects and funding directly targeting Council’s strategic goal to “Expand Affordable and Attainable Housing Options”. The funding also targets the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) goal to “Achieve Energy Efficiency and Emissions Reductions by Creating Compact, Complete Communities”.

### Financial Implications

It is anticipated that by November 1, 2023 when the final report is submitted to the Province, the City will have used the entire \$1.75 million allocated to the City through the Streamline Development Approval Fund. While the provincial funding will be spent, some projects may extend beyond the November 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Those projects extending past the Province’s deadline will be funded through re-allocation from the Land Management Information System (LMIS) budgeted funds and up to \$500,000 from the Capital Holding Account as per Council resolution CC2022-73 which ratified resolution FA2022-10 from the Finance and Administration Committee.

### Background

#### *Streamline Development Approvals Fund*

CGS successfully applied to the Province’s Streamline Development Approvals Fund (SDAF) in January of 2022. The fund is intended to help “Ontario’s 39 largest municipalities modernize, streamline and accelerate processes for managing and approving housing applications.” The SDAF specifies that the funding must be used for eligible projects generally within four streams:

- 1) Consulting fees related to process and/or policy improvements targeting residential development approvals and as-of-right residential zoning;
- 2) Costs associated with implementing E-permitting systems, including software and hardware;
- 3) Improving data, workflow or online guidelines that help streamline residential development approvals; and,
- 4) Diversity internships in building and planning departments.

These funding streams closely align with the Province's "Housing Affordability Task Force Report" (February, 2022), which identified planning policy changes to encourage more "as-of-right" residential density permissions and the municipal implementation of E-permitting systems as key tools for accelerating new home construction.

As part of the SDAF, the City was awarded up to \$1,750,000 in eligible funding. To access the funds, the City was required to enter into an agreement with the Province, a key component of which is the requirement that the eligible funds be spent prior to November 1, 2023 (initially February 28, 2023 but was subsequently extended) with a final report to be uploaded to the Province's portal prior to that date. The final report to the Province must contain a link to this publicly posted municipal staff report, which outlines the approved projects and actions.

Under the terms of the SDAF agreement, costs must be incurred between January 19, 2022 and November 1, 2023. The City has received 50% of the eligible funding (\$875,000) which was advanced upon execution of the agreement. CGS is required to submit a final report to the Province by November 1, 2023, documenting the projects and actions for which the funds were used, after which the Province will release the remaining \$875,000. Per the SDAF agreement any unspent funds would have to be returned to the Province.

### ***SDAF Alignment with CGS Initiatives***

The City has completed, or has included in the 2023 Work Plan, projects that align with the SDAF streams. Completed initiatives include: 1) the as-of-right zoning review, 2) the population, household and employment projections (to 2051), 3) the housing supply and demand analysis, 4) species at risk area scoping, and 5) hardware upgrades to support e-permitting implementation. Projects included in 2023 Work Plan that are underway include continued work on parkland standards for subdivisions and the refinement of natural hazard mapping within the settlement boundary.

The City's current and future focus on residential development is well aligned with the Province's goals of streamlining residential development. The SDAF has provided a unique opportunity for the City to leverage Provincial funding to make further improvements to development streamlining.

To support the completion of the projects, Resolution FA2022-10 was passed at the Finance and Administration Committee meeting of March 29, 2022:

"THAT the City of Greater Sudbury undertake the projects as outlined in the report entitled "Streamline Development Approvals Fund", from the General Manager of Growth and Infrastructure presented at the Finance and Administration Committee on March 29, 2022;

AND THAT any funds granted to the City from the Streamline Development Approvals Fund be used to fund the projects outlined in Appendix A;

AND THAT the funds previously approved to fund LMIS be used to fund the projects;

AND THAT up to \$500,000 to ensure the completion of the projects be funded from the Capital Holding Reserve."

## **SDAF Achievements**

### ***CGS Projects Funded through SDAF***

A list of projects to facilitate residential development, undertaken by the City and funded through SDAF is provided below, and in more detail in Appendix A, along with their current status and anticipated benefit to the development approval streamlining process. As mentioned, it is anticipated that all Provincial funds allocated to the City will be spent by the November deadline.

#### **Stream 1: Consulting Fees for Policy and Process Improvements**

- Species at Risk Area Scoping – reduce risk and uncertainty in development planning
- As-of-Right Zoning Review – to streamline the City's zoning by-law to allow as-of-right zoning for residential uses, reduce risk and timelines and increase residential opportunities
- Housing Supply and Demand Analysis – provides detailed assessment of City's housing needs for the next 20 years to help inform decision making and proactively adjust the City's land use planning framework where necessary
- Best Practice Review for Surplus Schools for Housing – to inform municipal decision making and adjust the land use planning framework where necessary to increase residential opportunities
- Parks Standards for Subdivision Manual – provides clear requirements for park land to reduce uncertainty for development
- Population, Household and Employment Projections (to 2051) – inform municipal policy development and planning for future growth
- Refinement of Natural Hazards Mapping within the Settlement Boundary – reduce risk and uncertainty for development
- LEAN review of Development Approvals – internal review of development approval process including recommendations for improved efficiencies

#### **Stream 2: E-permitting**

- Land Management Information System (LMIS) – Implementation of e-permitting system for building permits and development applications to streamline development process. Includes the following subcomponents:
  - Contract and consulting for E-permitting staff
  - Accella software license
  - E-permitting software
  - Hardware upgrades to support e-permitting system
- Temporary staff for Committee of Adjustment – to assist with backlog of development applications
- Development Desk pilot positions – to assist with streamlining of application intake process

#### **Stream 3: Data/Application/Workflow**

- Automate parcel fabric and linear infrastructure updates – software and data workflow improvements to ensure that the City's GIS information related to parcel fabric and linear infrastructure is current, accurate and complete to respond to development applications.
- Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Assessment and Plan – development of a City Plan to manage documents and development-related data
- Historical Permit, Development File Digitization and Data Acquisition and Digitization – digitization of historical building permit, development and property files for access through the City's e-permitting system

## ***Anticipated Streamlining Achievements***

Although the City has already undertaken, and continues to undertake, initiatives aimed at increasing the availability and affordability of housing, the additional projects funded through SDAF supplement and expand these efforts. The projects address streamlining throughout the development application process, from increased level of service for inquiries through the Development Desk Pilot Positions to greater certainty for applicants requiring various support studies for development applications. It is anticipated that the projects will result in more efficient processing of development applications, greater certainty with respect to study requirements for applications, and more efficiencies in the permitting process for residential applications

**Stream 1 Actions & Achievements:** Several projects will result in near-term efficiencies to the development approval process such as the as-of-right zoning, which will provide a best-practice review and stakeholder input on five housing related topics (mixed-use development, permitting residential uses on institutional lands, secondary dwelling units, minimum density targets and addressing affordable housing in large-scale development). Subject to Council approval, this review will lead to zoning by-law amendments that will facilitate residential development. Other projects will require supplementary work and implementation, such as the housing studies, parkland standards and natural hazards mapping, which will inform updates to the current policy framework and development approval process. Once implemented, the policy and process improvements collectively will reduce risk and uncertainty within the development approval process and provide a policy framework supportive of residential growth.

**Stream 2 Actions & Achievements:** LMIS, which will provide for a more efficient e-permitting process is in progress. The initial launch of the service (Phase 1) which provides a developer and citizen portal is now live for Building Services applications, with *Planning Act* applications to follow.

**Stream 3 Actions & Achievements:** Digitization of development files, improvements to Enterprise GIS processes and automated updates will support LMIS and allow for more efficiencies in the development approval and permitting process.

## **Conclusion**

The SDAF has provided an opportunity for the City to leverage Provincial funding to undertake several projects that will help streamline residential development approvals. Those projects extending beyond the SDAF deadline will be funded through re-allocation from budgeted LMIS funds and up to \$500,000 from the capital holding account.

## **Resources Cited**

1. Streamline Development Approvals Fund, March 29, 2022 <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=43663>
2. Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Recommendations Summary, April 11, 2022 <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=43727>

## Appendix 'A'

Project Funding Stream	Name of Project	Lead Department	Anticipated benefit to Development Approval Streamlining	Status
Consulting Fees for Policy and Process Improvements	Species at Risk Area Scoping	Planning Services	Provides additional clarity on where species at risk studies will and won't be required. Removes risk for development as these studies are time sensitive and can only be done in certain seasons.	Completed
	Housing Projects (As of Right Zoning Review; Supply and Demand Analysis; and, Institutional Surplus Lands)	Planning Services	Identify opportunities for providing additional as of right zoning permissions for residential development.	Completed
	Building Bylaw Amendment	Building Services	Building By-law update to provide clarity and consistent structure for building permit process and fee structure outside of the User Fee By-law.	Pending
	Develop Park Standards for Subdivision Manual	Leisure Services	This project would develop parkland and trail standards for the City's subdivision manual. This would provide clarity on park requirements for development applications, removing uncertainty and reducing review timelines.	Underway. Estimated completion Fall 2023.
	Joint business plan for Building Services, Planning Services, Engineering Services and Infrastructure Capital Planning	Planning Services, Building Services, Engineering Services and Infrastructure Capital Planning	Ensure alignment of Growth and Infrastructure sections and other CGS departments on the processing of development applications. Identify opportunities for structural improvements and succession planning.	Initiated
	LEAN review of development approval process	Planning Services	Review development approval process and identify opportunities for streamlining. Establish benchmarks and KPIs for development review and commenting.	Underway. Estimated completion Q2 2024
	Refinement of Natural Hazard Mapping within the Settlement Boundary	Planning Services/ Conservation Sudbury	Provides additional clarity on where natural hazard studies will and won't be required. Removes risk for development as the extent of natural hazards is better known.	Underway. Estimated completion: August 2023.
	Update Lot Grading Policy	Planning Services/ Building Services	Would review and streamline the current policy for lot grading	Initiated

<b>E Permitting</b>	Land Management Information System (LMIS) (Building and Planning Implementation)	Growth & Infrastructure	Enables online e-Permitting for customers and digitized workflows for development and building applications. Also can track and report processing time.	Underway. Building Services (Phase 1a) is completed; Planning Services (Phase 1b) to commence August 2023.
	Contract and Consulting Staff	Corporate Services	Systems Analyst assigned to build the e-permit solution	Completed
	Accela - software license for 2022; LMIS goes operational May 2022.	Growth & Infrastructure	Software for the e-Permitting implementation in the first year.	Completed
	Editing software w/integration to Accela	Corporate Services	PDF editing software to allow electronic review of permit applications.	Completed
	Hardware upgrades	Corporate Services	Hardware to assist with digital review of permit applications	Completed
	Mobile hardware for development and inspections	Corporate Services	Hardware to assist with digital review and processing of permit applications	Completed
	Building Services Temporary Staff to assist with LMIS implementation	Building Service, Corporate Services	2 staff hired in Building Services under Development Desk Pilot Program, 1 staff hired in Building Services to implement LMIS, 2 Staff hired in IT to implement LMIS project	Completed
	eSignatures for e-Permitting	Corporate Services	Implement and purchase first year of Adobe Sign licenses to enable digital signatures by development and permitting staff and their customers	Initiated
	Temporary Staff for Committee of Adjustment	Planning Services	1 temporary staff to assist with processing Committee of Adjustment Applications.	Completed
	Development Desk Pilot Positions	Building Services	These pilot positions are assigned to the development desk located that the City's new one stop shop. These contract positions will assist in more efficiently processing building permits and planning applications.	Completed
	LMIS Phase 2	Corporate Services, Building Services, Engineering Services, By-law, Fire, Conservation Sudbury	Expand E-permitting system (LMIS) to other City departments and external agencies, including Engineering Services, By-law, Fire and Conservation Sudbury. The budget amount assumes Phase 2 will be approximately 2/3 the size of Phase 1.	Anticipated start in 2024.

<b>Data/ Application/ Workflow</b>	Automate parcel fabric and linear infrastructure updates	Planning Services	Automate workflow to accommodate "real time" updates to the City's parcel layer. This would expedite development approval process such as municipal addressing and building permits.	Underway. Estimated completion: Q4 2024
	Automate bringing C plan data into GIS asset models	Planning Services, Engineering Services, Corporate Services	Filling in as-built gaps with data and automating workflows, will show infrastructure improvements prior to completion of as-built drawings. This would ensure up to date infrastructure information is available for reviewing development applications.	Underway. Estimated completion: March 2024
	Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Assessment and Plan	Corporate Services	Phase 1 of a project to assess and inventory available information and plan an ECM solution to securely store and provide easy search and access to information for the staff and public.	Completed
	Historical Permit and Development File Digitization	Building Services, Planning Services, Engineering Services	Digitization of paper development files into searchable PDF	Underway. Anticipated completion: August 2023.
	Data Acquisition and Digitization	Planning Services, Engineering Services	This project would see the acquisition and digitization of engineering documents and datasets for inclusion in the Enterprise GIS system. This would lead to efficiencies in the permitting process and all required documents would be readily available to access and review. Data sets to be digitized include but are not limited to rail crossing agreements, historical site plans, utility easements, historical traffic count data, and municipal consents.	Underway. Anticipated completion 2024.