



Report
Staff Report
 The Corporation of the City of Brampton
 4/8/2024

Date: 2024-02-23

Subject: **2023 Development Activity Report**

Contact: Divjot Singh, Advisor, Special Projects, Development Services and Design

David VanderBerg, Manager, Development Services, Development Services and Design

Report number: Planning, Bld & Growth Mgt-2024-171

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from David VanderBerg, Manager, Development Services, Development Services and Design to the Planning and Development Committee Meeting of April 8, 2024 re: **2023 Development Activity Report**, be received.

OVERVIEW:

- The purpose of this report is to bring forward for information the **2023 Development Activity Report** as included in Attachment 1 and to provide commentary on the information included in it. The Development Activity Report summarizes the development activity that took place last year in Brampton.
- The Development Activity Report provides information on planning applications submitted to the Development Services and Design Division as well as information related to housing, employment, maps showing prominent applications by ward pairing, and building permit activity.
- Commentary is provided within this report on the statistics in the Development Activity Report, including on development application volumes, housing, employment, and sustainability.
- Going forward, staff will continue to focus on building the Department's capacity for data analytics and improving the ways data collected is shared.

- **There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.**

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this report is to bring forward for information the 2023 Development Activity Report as included in Attachment 1, and to provide commentary on the information within it. The Development Activity Report summarizes the development activity that took place last year in Brampton. It provides information on planning applications submitted to the Development Services and Design Division as well as information related to housing, employment, maps showing prominent applications by ward pairings, and building permit activity.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Tracking development activity is important in measuring how the City is doing in meeting its planning goals, such as for housing, employment, and sustainability, and to suggest areas for improvement, whether policies or processes.

The following are observations and commentary on the statistics provided in the Development Activity Report:

- *Number of Applications:*

There were a total of 870 planning applications submitted in 2023 taking into account all application types. This is a 4% decrease from the 902 received in 2022, which in turn was a decrease from the 926 applications received in 2021.

However, not all application types are equivalent in the scale and nature of development associated with them. Some, such as minor variances, part lot control exemptions and custom homes, are typically associated with small scale development or no development at all. The following are the statistics for the application categories associated with larger developments and that have a larger impact on overall development activity:

- *Official Plan Amendments / Zoning By-law Amendments / Plans of Subdivision:* 45 applications were received in this category, which is an increase from the 44 received in 2022 but a decrease from the 55 received in 2021.
- *Site Plans:* 114 site plan applications were received, which is a significant decrease from the 187 received in 2022 and the 249 received in 2021.

The decrease in the number of site plan applications illustrates the fact that development activity is not the sole driver for the number of applications received. That number is also affected by the legislation or municipal procedures for when an application is needed.

In late 2022, the Province revised the Planning Act which removed the ability for municipalities to require site plan applications for any residential development with less than 10 dwelling units. Prior to the legislative change, site plan applications for new custom single-detached homes, or additions to them, represented a significant proportion of site plan applications, with 60 such applications in 2021 and 42 in 2022. While the number of site plan applications are still down, much of the decrease is attributable to no longer requiring site plan approval for single-detached homes (or anything less than 10 residential units). There was still new construction in this category in 2023, it just did not need a site plan application.

The number of development applications only reveals a limited amount of data about development activity. The Development Activity Report also informs of the overall quantities of development proposed by applications, as well as land use type.

- *Housing:*

Brampton's Housing Pledge outlines the City's commitment to the Province's goal of achieving 1.5 million new housing units by 2031 with a specific target for Brampton of 113,000 new homes. The Province has also provided specific yearly targets for housing starts in Brampton of 8,287 units in 2023, 9,417 units in 2024 and 11,300 units in 2025.

The Development Activity Report found that:

- 22,515 residential units were proposed through rezoning, subdivision, development permit applications 2023. These were either approved or are awaiting a decision.
- 12,432 residential units were approved through rezoning, subdivision, and site plan applications. This includes applications submitted in 2023 and in previous years.
- 30,199 residential units are in the pipeline – these are units that are approved, but for which a building permit has yet to be issued. It includes the 12,432 units approved last year (unless built) plus any units from applications that were approved in previous years but have not yet been built.
- 4,494 additional residential dwelling units (ARUs) were registered.
- 215 affordable dwelling units to be built by the Region of Peel or a non-profit agency were approved. Note that this statistic does not capture all approved affordable housing as it does not include housing from for-profit developers. There are not currently statistics collected on the amount of affordable housing proposed by for-profit developers at the planning application stage and it would likely be difficult to collect given the limited amount of information known at that stage.

The Province's annual targets are for housing starts, as opposed to the above noted approvals that have been approved. So, the above numbers cannot be used to directly evaluate how the City is doing in meeting the Province's targets. For reference, the Province's online tracking site (www.ontario.ca/page/tracking-housing-supply-progress) shows that there were 7,028 housing starts in 2023 in Brampton and that the Province has assigned it a housing target status of "On Track."

The planning application statistics do have value in providing insight for forecasting how the City may do in meeting the targets in future years, as the applications being proposed and approved now are the pipeline from which future housing starts will come. It is positive that both the proposed and approved number of applications exceed the targets, and that the number of applications in the overall pipeline is several times larger than the annual housing start target.

It is important, however, to interject two notes of caution:

- Not all proposed or approved dwelling units get built – in this regard some landowners submit applications with the intent of making their lands more attractive for someone else to purchase rather than developing the property themselves.
- There is variability in the timing for when developments are constructed after approvals are issued – timing for construction is largely controlled by applicants and are driven by external factors such as economic conditions, construction supply chains, and business priorities, over which the City has little or no influence. Further, larger developments are typically built by the development industry in phases, and that phasing needs to be accounted for when projecting annual housing starts.

Both of these factors above can affect when and if a development proceeds to construction.

Planning staff are working on a project to be completed this year that will further enhance key performance indicators (KPIs) for the planning approval process. These performance indicators are intended to improve the line of sight into the development approval process, including more detailed information on timing for how applications move through the approval process, and information on the ratio of applications that proceed through the various approval stages and ultimately to construction. One of the goals for these KPIs is to improve our ability to predict future housing starts and how well the City is doing in meeting housing needs and delivering other land uses, such as financial forecasting and the impact on Development Charges, and Cash in Lieu of Parkland revenues.

Growth of apartment units - An additional notable statistic in the housing numbers relates to the form of housing. The significant majority of new units are

apartments – with 91.7% of proposed residential units being apartments, and 76.1% of approved residential units being apartments – rather than ground-related units. This matches province-wide numbers where, in January 2024, 80.1% of the units under construction were apartments (CMHC Housing Market Information Portal, <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en#Profile/1/1/Canada>). There seems to be a clear shift in the City to apartment forms of housing from the historically predominant ground-related forms of development.

- *Employment:*

Developing new employment uses is critical to building complete communities and achieving economic development goals. In 2023, 466,041 square metres of industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) development were proposed through planning applications, and 498,487 square metres of ICI uses were approved (this includes applications submitted in 2023 and in previous years).

In comparison with the statistics above from 2023, we advise that in 2022 there was 902,628 square metres of ICI uses proposed, and 222,603 square metres were approved. This shows that the amount of approved development more than doubled in 2023; but that the amount of proposed development had decreased in 2023.

Notable employment-related applications approved in 2023 include:

- Peel Memorial Phase 2 hospital building at 20 Lynch Street.
- Four industrial buildings at 8000 Dixie (former Ford factory) totaling 119,549 square metres of floor area.
- Industrial development at 5200 Countryside with a total of 79,019 square metres of floor area.
- Five story office building at 150 First Gulf Boulevard.
- Industrial building at 8386 Highway 50 with a gross floor area of 36,159 square metres.

- *Sustainability:*

In 2015, the City launched the Sustainable New Communities Program to encourage the sustainability performance of development proposals. It uses a scoring system of bronze, silver, and gold to evaluate sustainability, with bronze being the minimum required score per Council Resolution PDC078-2022.

Development applications received in 2023 scored as follows:

- 70% achieving a bronze score,
- 17.5% achieved silver score,
- 2.5% achieved gold, and

- 10% did not achieve the bronze minimum (these must meet a bronze threshold before being approved).

Although the sustainability statistics were similar in 2022, (67% of applications achieved a bronze score) it is important to note that changes to the program in 2022 made it more difficult to achieve a bronze score. It provided new thresholds, whereby a development scoring a 'Bronze' in the new program would have scored a 'Silver' in the old program. So, while the percentage of applications meeting the minimum score increased only slightly, the developments scoring bronze in 2023 have a higher level of sustainability because of the program changes. Solely reviewing the percentages of applications achieving certain scores year-to-year does not tell the whole about how development is becoming more sustainable as a result of this scoring requirement.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

Other Implications:

There are no other corporate implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

The information in the Development Activity Report will support the City's work to achieve the objectives in a number of the Strategic Focus Areas, particularly Growing Urban Centres & Neighbourhoods, by providing data that can be used to help shape new or updated policies and to improve planning processes.

CONCLUSION:

This report forwards for information the 2023 Year End Development Activity Report, which provides information on the development activity that took place last year in Brampton.

Going forward, staff will continue to focus on building the Department's capacity for data analytics, including expanding understanding of the drivers behind trends shown in the data, forecasting what is likely to happen in the future, and using data to suggest actions to be taken.

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – 2023 Year End Development Activity Report