

**Date:** 2021-04-07

**Subject:** Information Report

**Secondary Title:** Planning Building & Economic Development Departmental Renewal TOCP Update – Technology Improvements

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**Report Number:** Planning, Bld & Ec Dev-2021-451

**Recommendations:**

1. **THAT** the report titled “Planning, Building & Economic Development Departmental Renewal ToCP Update – Technology Improvements” at the Planning and Development Committee meeting of May 10, 2021, be received for information; and
2. **THAT** staff report to Council with annual updates on development trends as part of the City’s Growth Management Term of Council Priority.

**Overview:**

- This report provides an update on the Planning, Building & Economic Development Departmental Renewal (existing ToCP 1.5.1).
- The Renewal is a comprehensive initiative focused on modernizing the Planning, Building & Economic Development Department’s operations along three pillars: People, Process and Technology.
- The delivery of recent technology projects has resulted in improvements to many aspects of the Department including:
  - customer service;
  - business intelligence and analytics;

- **improved tools for staff and stakeholders;**
- **streamlining of development approvals; and**
- **establish robust data sources for an effective Growth Management program.**
  
- **Council’s proactive investment in the Department’s Renewal program and associated technology improvements has enabled the Department to maintain and enhance delivery of core services in an efficient and seamless manner throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic.**
  
- **Improvements in the Department’s systems and technology provide more robust analytic and business intelligence as well as more accurate monitoring data to better inform Council’s decisions regarding such things as:**
  - **future growth and changes in the community;**
  - **discussions with the development industry;**
  - **policy analysis and development;**
  - **advocacy efforts on streamlining approvals; and,**
  - **funding from other levels of government.**

### **Background:**

In 2019, the Planning, Building & Economic Development Department initiated the Renewal program to modernize the Department’s Operations under the pillars of “People”, “Process” and “Technology.” The focus of this staff report is to highlight how efforts under the Technology pillar are supporting multiple initiatives within the Department.

In March 2020, the City of Brampton quickly adapted in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This disruption to normal business operations required a rapid rethink of service delivery while adhering to the safety protocols enforced by public health and state of emergency legislation. Council’s proactive investment in technology to modernize and improve service delivery allowed the Planning, Building & Economic Development department to mobilize and respond to changes brought on by the Pandemic, resulting in:

- enhanced customer service – to the public, development industry and Council;
- new areas of business intelligence and analytics on development trends; and,
- continuous improvement to streamline development approvals to support with economic recovery efforts.

This staff report provides Council with an overview of these advancements aligning to “Brampton is a Well-Run City” geared to improving customer service and service delivery as part of the comprehensive Department Renewal.

## **1.0 Customer Service Enhancements**

The Departmental Renewal is enhancing customer service and modernizing operations. Outlined below are key technology related initiatives completed and/or underway:

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>High Level Description</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Implementation of new development tracking software (Accela – Phase 1)	Upgrade of development application software	Enhanced data analytics, integration with GIS and application status tracking.
BramPlan Online (Accela – Phase 2)	External facing platform (industry and public) to submit and track status of development applications.	In-real time data and increased transparency on status of development applications.
Council Plan Viewer	Self-serve platform for members of Council to obtain information on the status of development applications.	Improved communications, in real-time data and tracking, and increased transparency on development applications.
On-line Application Payment	E-portal to submit payments for Building permits. Ability to make payments on development applications (<\$10,000).	Efficiencies in processing of cheques, reduce need for in-person transactions.
Mobile Inspections/Remote Video Inspection (MobilInspect)	Mobile application allowing Inspectors travel directly to the site and using their mobile device and enter details onsite without returning back to the office. This application synchronizes data with Amanda software allowing residents to view status fairly quickly.	Efficiencies in travel time for Inspectors, data integration with Amanda and status of inspections for residents.
Digital clearances of Legal Agreement	Legal staff and Planning staff's implementation of new process steps to accommodate digital signoffs for Subdivision Agreements and Site Plan Agreements.	Improved turnaround times for the execution of Legal Agreements.
Virtual Foreign Direct Investment Mission with Japan	Utilization of online tools and forums to drive business investment interest and build relationships.	Increased understanding of investment opportunities within Brampton for existing and new business investors/companies.
Enhanced 2-D and 3-D visualization for Development Application analysis	New visualization and modeling tools applied to development application review.	Improved identification of potential issues and solutions through a shared collaborative visual platform.

The implementation of coordinated improvements to transform the Department's tools has reinforced trust and confidence of staff, the community and industry partners with the focus on:

- Customer service - To attract investment, increase our efficiencies in development applications and building permit processing, and enhance community engagement through virtual consultation;
- Workforce Enablement - Ensuring our staff are engaged and have the appropriate tools and technology to work remotely while maintaining core functions and service level standards; and
- Brampton's changing nature of development – To monitor and report on trends as the City shifts from greenfield subdivision approvals towards increasingly complex intensification applications in existing built up areas.

### **Council Plan Viewer: A Snapshot**

Planning staff has worked closely with our I.T. staff to create a new software tool for members of Council (including administrative staff) that will provide real time information on development applications (i.e. mapping, application details, status). This tool, named the "Council Plan Viewer." is near complete and should be operational soon. This will include both a desktop and mobile portal allowing for timely responses to the public, industry and business. Once developed, information for Council on how to access and operate the "Council Plan Viewer" will be available.

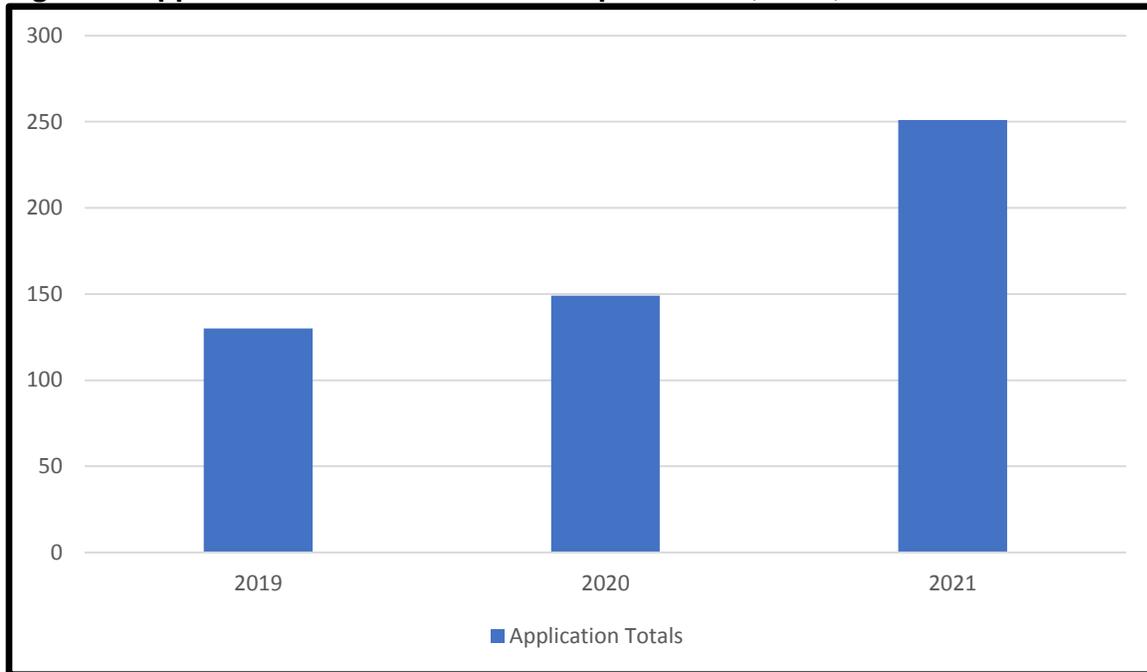
### **2.0: Development Trends – City and Ward Specific**

Through the evolution of our development tracking software, the Department can now track, analyze and report on development application trends both City-wide and Ward specific, namely:

- Year to Year applications totals and by type;
- Applications by Type;
- Number of Units applied for;
- Number of files/Planner; and
- Applications by type/Ward.

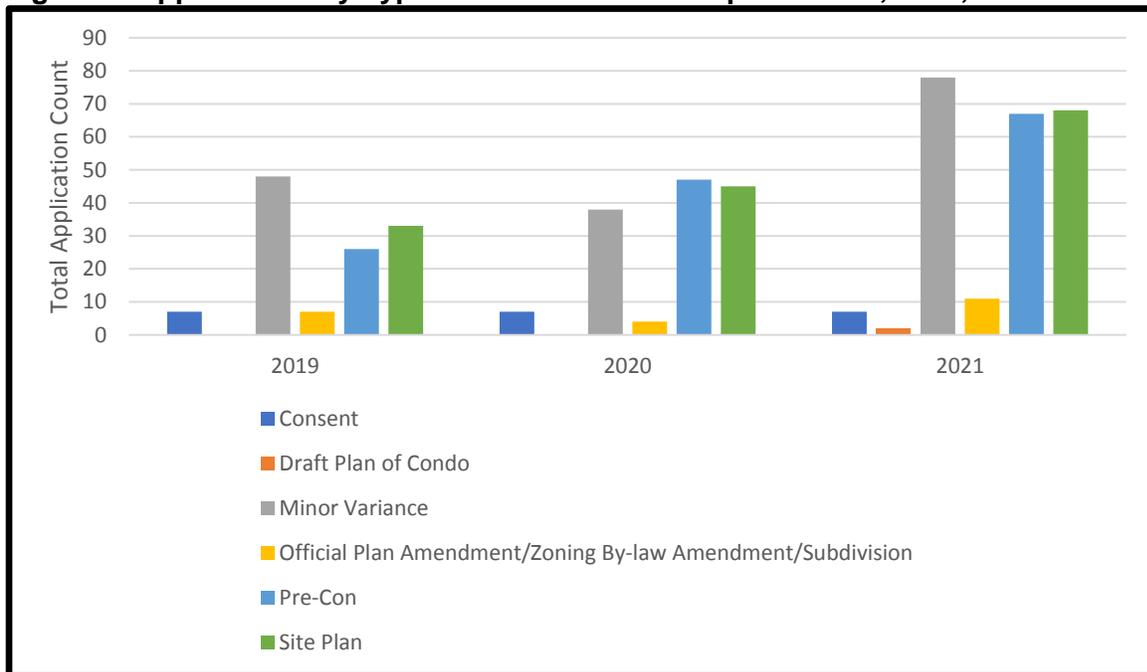
These analyses are available for development applications post 2019, due to the implementation of the Accela software at that time. Staff will be working towards improving historic data sets to be able to report on trending and patterns with earlier data. Below is a snapshot of the types of reporting that is now easily prepared using our current development tracking software.

**Figure 1: Applications Submitted Jan 1 – April 2: 2019, 2020, & 2021**

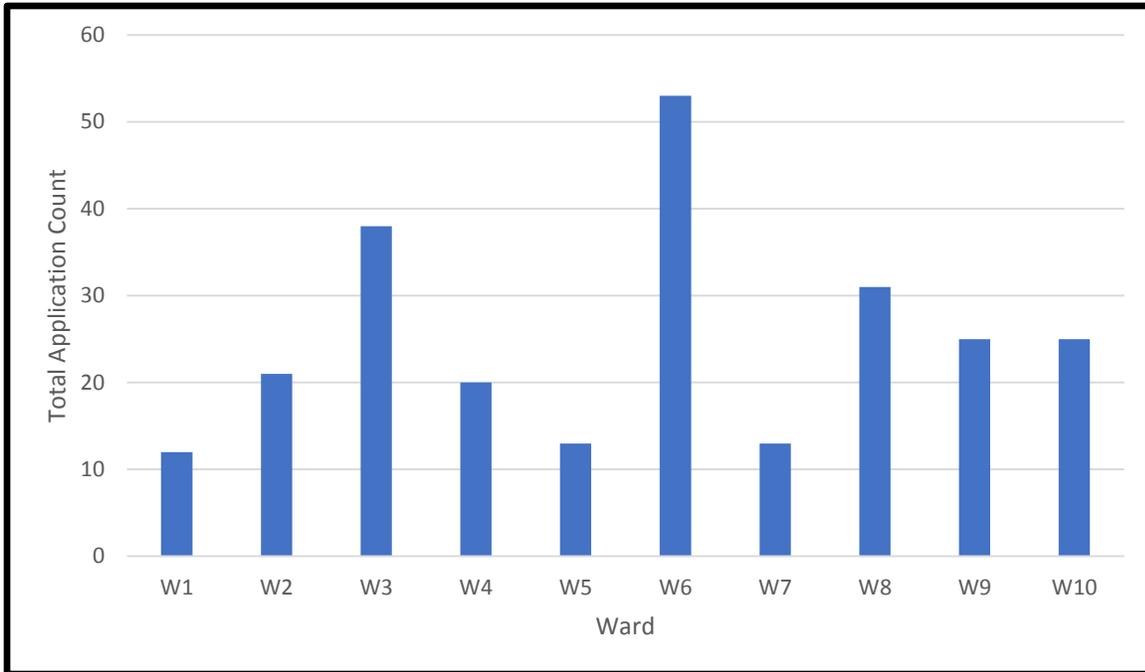


\*note: this includes all application types (i.e. Pre-Consultations, Minor Variance, Site Plans, Subdivision, etc.)

**Figure 2: Applications by Type: Submitted Jan 1 – April 2: 2019, 2020, & 2021**

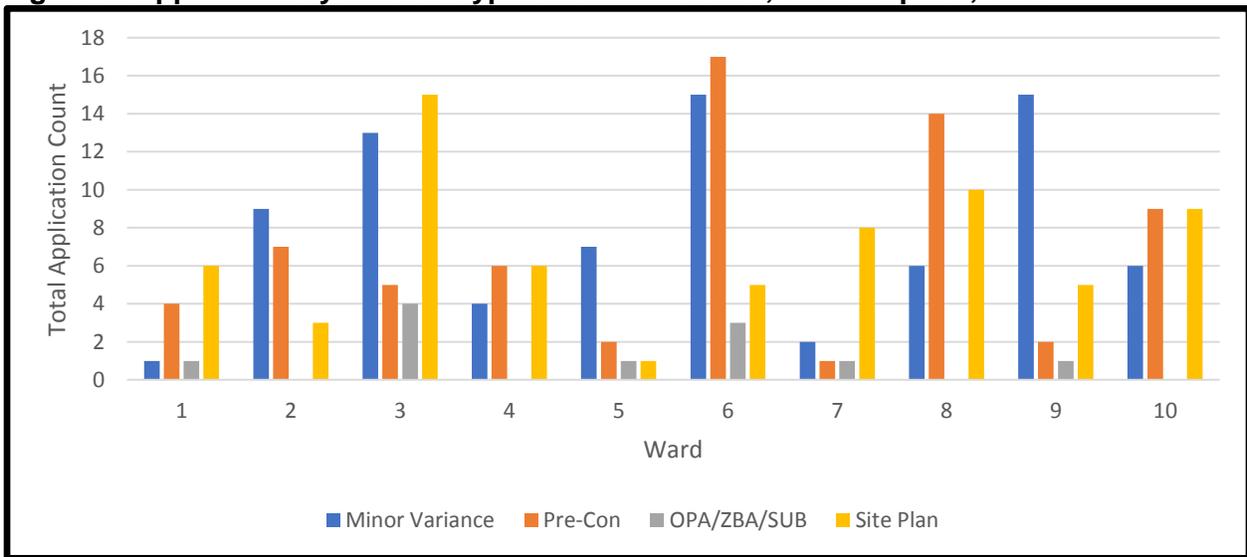


**Figure 3: Applications by Ward: Submitted Jan 1, 2021 – April 2, 2021**



\*note: this includes all application types (i.e. Pre-Consultations, Minor Variance, Consent, Site Plans, Subdivision, etc.)

**Figure 4: Application by Ward & Type: Submitted Jan 1, 2021 – April 2, 2021**



\*note: this includes the following sub-set of major application types – Minor Variance, Pre-Consultation, Official Plan Amendment/Zoning By-Law Amendment/Subdivision and Site Plan

Based on the above, it is evident the City is trending to realize a significant increase in development applications in 2021 compared to recent years. Of note, the number of Pre-consultation (Pre-Con) applications received to date this year is close to the combined totals for 2019 and 2020 over the same duration (January to April). On average, approximately 50%-60% of Pre-Consultation applications move into full applications anywhere from within three to six months after their date of submission.

This trending indicates confidence in the industry to continue to invest in the City, despite the economic outlook associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As reporting continues, staff will bring forward information trends on:

- Development type (residential, mixed-use, industrial, commercial and institutional);
- Number of units (draft approved and registered);
- Gross floor area (GFA);
- Residential unit types - Changing nature of development as the City continues to evolve from greenfield to more intensification; and
- Number of approved units in comparison to population and employment forecasts and building permit revenue – to inform infrastructure financing through development charges.

These key performance indicators (KPIs) along with others will help to validate the effectiveness of Official Plan policies and support growing bodies of work such as the Growth Management Term of Council Priority (ToCP). A Council workshop on leveraging this data, to inform the Growth Management ToCP, is being planned for this fall.

### **3.0 Continuous Improvement and Performance Monitoring**

In addition to the KPIs shown above, staff is leveraging technology to inform ongoing efforts in continuous improvement and performance monitoring to support internal metrics including:

- Review and process time for applications;
- Determining root causes for application process delays;
- Application Milestone reporting (i.e. time from a public meeting to Council approval); and
- Applications/staff to look at operating cost/capita.

The table below provides an overview of process improvements currently underway:

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
New site plan category for industrial developments	Reduction in submission and review requirements for certain industrial developments.	To attract investment, support economic growth and job creation.
Reduction in circulation time limits for site plan	Process improvements to reduce commenting time-frames for standard site plans.	To create efficiencies in the end-to-end process.
Prioritization of development applications directly tied to ToCP	Criteria-based approach to prioritize development applications.	Focus the highest level of effort to applications aligned

		to Council's investments and ToCPs.
Simplifying development-related agreements	Standardize and simplify, using templates where appropriate.	To create efficiencies and clarity when clearing conditions for applications.
Re-designed pre-consultation application process	Formalized time sequencing for pre-con application submission to the pre-con meeting date.	To reduce application processing timelines.

Staff is planning to bring forward a report to Council later this year that expands on these efforts, highlighting KPIs to monitor and report on their effectiveness, such as:

- Meaningful reductions in processing times and circulations;
- Prompt resolution of internal conflicts;
- Increased predictability and consistency; and
- Additional staff capacity.

**Corporate Implications:**

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications associated with this staff report. The funds for specific technology improvement projects and the Renewal program have been approved. Any future resources and funding requirements will be considered, for Council's consideration, as part of future Budget processes.

Other Implications:

**Term of Council Priorities:**

This report provides an update on Term of Council Priority 1.5.1 and directly aligns with the Strategic Direction – “Brampton is a Well-Run City” and demonstrates the City's efforts to support economic recovery, enhance customer service and deliver service quality excellence in a fiscally responsible manner.

**Conclusion:**

While the COVID-19 Pandemic has been very disruptive, it has underscored the need for organizations to be agile and responsive. Council's proactive investments in the Departmental Renewal program and associated technology improvements has proven to pay dividends and positioned the City to ensure we are responsive to the needs of our staff, residents, businesses and development industry. Staff will continue to provide

report of this kind to inform Council on the Department's Renewal program and the progress to modernize and improve our operations.

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