

**Date:** 2021-09-27

**Subject:** Information Report

**Secondary Title:** Expedited Industrial Development Approvals

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**Report Number:** Planning, Bld & Ec Dev-2021-1068

**Recommendations:**

1. **THAT** the report titled “Expedited Industrial Development Approvals” at the Planning and Development Committee meeting of October 18, 2021, be received for information.

**Overview:**

- In 2019, the Planning, Building and Economic Development Renewal Project (ToCP 1.5.1) was initiated to identify actions and opportunities to modernize the Department, under the pillars of “People”, “Process” and “Technology.”
- An outcome of this ongoing work is the exploration of operational efficiencies and process changes to support the expeditious processing and approval of development applications.
- This report provides information on the Planning, Building and Economic Development Department’s process improvements with respect to the introduction of a new, expedited Industrial development approvals process, that will replace the current site plan approval process, for industrial developments that have particular locational attributes.

- **The implementation of this new industrial development review process will:**
  - **Improve customer service;**
  - **Eliminate unnecessary processes;**
  - **Significantly reduce approval timelines;**
  - **Increase staff capacity; and,**
  - **Support the City’s Covid-19 economic recovery efforts.**

## **Background:**

In 2019, the Planning, Building and Economic Development Department, initiated the Renewal program to identify actions and opportunities to modernize the Department under the pillars of “People”, “Process” and “Technology.” The focus of this report is to highlight one of the continuous improvement projects under the “Process” pillar that will provide enhanced customer service and support the City’s Covid-19 economic recovery efforts.

## **Current Situation:**

### Industrial Development Approvals Process – Site Plan and Building Permit

Where Industrial Development is permitted in the City, (either as of right, or where a Zoning By-law amendment for such a use is approved) a Site Plan Review process is required. Site Plan approval is required prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

The Site Plan review process examines design and technical aspects of a proposed development to ensure compliance with all municipal requirements, standards and objectives. Site Plan applications are generally reviewed with respect to (but not limited to) the following considerations:

- zoning by-law requirements,
- grading and servicing standards
- landscaping standards,
- urban design objectives,
- environmental conservation.

The Site Plan review process helps to ensure that the City can achieve a certain look and feel for developments that go beyond minimum standards that are protected for within the Zoning By-law.

This level of review is critical for many areas of the City, and certain types of development, to ensure high quality building design, quality landscaping, and compatible orientation to the street and public realm. Protecting for these items helps ensure that the City achieves Vision 2040.

Through the continuous process improvement review under the Renewal program, it has been determined that there is a sufficient level of protection within the Zoning By-law for it to be appropriate to exempt industrial developments, in certain parts of the City, from the site plan approvals process.

The development of a new, modified building permit process (Expedited Industrial Approval Process) for site plan exempt industrial developments will eliminate non-value added review and processing steps, create capacity for staff, and provide measurable reductions in approval timelines for industry which will support the City's Covid-19 economic recovery efforts.

### Expedited Industrial Approvals Process – Site Plan Exemption and Modified Building Permit

The Building Division, through a modified building permit review and approvals process, will administer the new Expedited Industrial Approvals Process. Modest additions to the existing building permit process will be applied to eligible industrial applications, specifically the requirement to submit engineering documents (eg. Functional Servicing Reports and Storm Water Management studies) and traffic and access analysis.

The Expedited Industrial Approvals Process will apply to lands within the City that have an Industrial Zone (M1 through to M4). Some exceptions to the exemption will apply, including, but not limited to:

- lands with the Industrial Business Zone (MBU);
- lands with an Industrial Zone but where the proposal is for a permitted non-industrial use;
- lands zone industrial but abutting arterial roads, or roads where a road widening is required; and,
- lands zoned industrial but includes lands that are zoned Open Space or have known heritage resources.

These exceptions to the exemption are required to ensure that applications of these types and in these locations are developed to the standards and levels of protections provided by a fulsome site plan review.

A City working group that includes staff from across the Planning, Building and Economic Development and Public Works and Engineering Departments, including Traffic Service Management and Environment and Development Engineering, is currently refining full submission, review and implementation details for the Expedited Industrial Approvals Process. It is expected that this new process will be implemented in Q1 2022.

## Enhanced Customer Service

The introduction of the Expedited Industrial Development Approvals Process is expected to lead to a measurably significant reduction in approval timelines. The Site Plan approval process currently takes between six to twelve months, which is dependent on the number of resubmissions an applicant is required to make, and their diligence in addressing City staff's comments. The new process, as demonstrated in the City of Mississauga, where such a process exists, has demonstrated reviews and approvals can be completed within a matter of three months or less. As the new process is implemented, staff will monitor processing timeframes to ensure that the new process is achieving the expedited reductions in timeframe.

## Resourcing Improvements

With only minimum requirements to be mandated with submissions for this new process, staff across the development review process will realize increased capacity through the removal of unnecessary review and commenting steps. This increased capacity will allow staff to focus on application review where design and interface with the public realm are of critical importance to achieve the City's vision. Increasing staff's ability to focus on these files will also support these applications getting to building permit more quickly. There may be a need to adjust, or introduce a new, application fee for this specific application type to offset the time and expense associated with staff's involvement on the expedited approval in the Building Division. This determination will be made once the implementation process has been reviewed and finalized.

## Economic Impact

Streamlining development approvals is generally recognized as a key tool for cities to increase investment and support economic recovery. The Expedited Industrial Development Approval process is a direct response to industry concerns around timelines affecting construction and user move-in dates, and is fully aligned with the City's Economic Recovery Strategy.

The new process will work to increase the City's competitiveness and can be leveraged as a tool to attract new investment and encourage existing investors to expand local operations and facilities.

## **Corporate Implications:**

### Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Any future resources and funding required will be discussed in a future report to Council, pending Council approval.

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:**

The Expedited Industrial Approvals Process is a responsive process improvement that will realize enhanced customer service, faster approvals and support the City’s economic recovery post Covid-19. Implementing this new process will require amendments to the City’s Building By-law and Site Plan Control By-law. These items will be brought to Council for approval in the near future.

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**Attachments: N/A**