

Memo

To: Members of Council
From: Nancy Sully, Commissioner, Corporate Services
Neil Garbe, Commissioner, Community Development
CC: Jane Clohecy, CAO
Date: October 19, 2023
Subject: Streamline Development Approval Fund Update

The town received provincial funding through the Streamline Development Approval Fund Initiative. This report provides details on how the funding was used and the final outcomes achieved.

Background

The Streamline Development Approval Fund (hereafter SDAF) is a \$49 million investment from the Province of Ontario to help unlock housing supply by streamlining, digitizing, and modernizing current municipal approaches to managing and approving applications for residential developments. In addition to implementing municipal efficiencies to accelerate housing development, the approved funds may be attributed to hiring temporary staff to eliminate existing backlogs related to development approvals and/or to support diversity internship opportunities in the planning and building departments.

In January 2022, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing confirmed Oakville's funding approval of \$1,000,000. The agreement was finalized on February 25, and all projects utilizing this funding are required to be completed by November 1, 2023. There is no financial impact to the Town, as eligible costs are covered 100% up to the maximum approved allocation.

Town Approach

To maximize the use of the funding within a limited timeframe, the town made a strategic decision to allocate the funds toward two key objectives:

1. Advancing and enhancing online services.
2. Resolving the backlog of existing applications that had accumulated during the pandemic.

The funding, totaling \$1,000,000, was evenly distributed between these two priorities.

The online services projects selected were already in the planning stages and align closely with the town's overarching digital strategy and the property development digital plan.

SDAF Program Workplan & Status

The table below provides a list of the projects and filled positions as part of the SDAF Program and their status as of October 16, 2023, organized by criteria. For more information on each of the projects, please see the [Final SDAF Report](#).

#	Project Name	Status
	Improvements to Online Services	
1	Development engineering permits & inspections online	Completed
2	Sign and Noise Permits online	Completed
3	Planning/development applications online (for 3 types only)	Completed
4	Property Survey Online	Completed
5	Portal improvements for building permits/inspections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1: Develop request for proposal and hire vendor (completed) Phase 2: Design, configure and implement portal changes (to be completed by Q1 2024) 	Partially Completed
6	Plan review and circulation tool (ePlan) for building, planning, enforcement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1: Acquisition and implementation of ePlan tool (completed) Phase 2: Customization and configuration (to be completed by Q1 2024) 	Partially Completed
	Standardization of terminology, application process, data requirements	
7	Development Engineering Standards & Guidelines Update	Completed
8	Bill 23 Compliance Changes*	Completed
	Data/application management/workflow, digital drawing software, or 3D tools	
9	BIM Pilot Study for building permits	Completed
10	Implementation for ArcGIS Urban for Uptown Core	Completed
11	Municipal Reporting on Planning Matters Compliance*	Completed
12	Temporary Staffing to Clear Backlog	
	1. Inspector in Forestry	N/A
	2. Planner in Planning Services	N/A
	3. Development Engineering Technologist in Development Services	N/A
	4. Inspector in Development Services	N/A
	5. Inspector in Permits & Inspections section	N/A
	6. Admin in Road Corridor section	N/A
	7. Inspector in Permits & Inspections section	N/A
	8. Admin in Transportation and Engineering	N/A

	9. Business Analyst Co-op Student to support projects 8 and 11 above*	N/A
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As of the October 16, 2023, the town has made use of the entire allocated funding of \$1,000,000. Comprehensive financial details will be submitted to the province as per their designated reporting procedure on November 1, 2023.

Results Achieved

1. Advancing and enhancing online services:

- **Launched four new online services:** Development Engineering Permits & Inspections, Sign and Noise Permits, three types of Planning/development applications, and Property Surveys requests. Recently, the town's effort in delivering online services was recognized by Granicus. The town received the 2023 Digital Government Award for [Operational Excellence](#) for the Sign & Noise Permits project.
- **Acquired and currently implementing an electronic plan review and circulation tool (ePlan)** to help make the review process for permits and development applications more expedient, collaborative, and transparent.
- **Implementing enhancements to online services for building permits and inspections** and simplifying our back end permitting system to create more efficiencies for staff and enhance the customer experience.
- **Developed and launched new Development Engineering Standards & Guidelines** which will provide clarity for applicants and reduce incomplete applications.
- **Implemented over 27 technology and process changes** to comply with Bill 23 and Reg 73/23.
- **Completed two pilots using new technology** and methods for reviewing and assessing permits and applications. Those include piloting Building Information Modelling (BIM) and 3D technologies to help visualize the impacts of development.

2. Resolving the backlog of existing applications:

- Over 500 private tree removal permits, and 650 related inspections performed.
- Reduced the backlog for development engineering permit inspections by 369.
- Over 8,000 condo, contract, and subdivision records (images, PDFs, and drawings) and over 4,700 engineering permit application files digitized and organized for future reference.
- Over 30 planning applications reviewed and processed.

- Over 70 engineering reviews completed for permits and development applications.

Conclusion

Acknowledgement

The SDAF funding has played a pivotal role in propelling the town's online services forward and effectively addressing the application backlog. The town expresses its deep appreciation for the financial support generously offered by the province, as well as their flexibility in granting an extension for the utilization of these funds.

Success Factors

The town's advantageous position to leverage this funding opportunity can be attributed to the groundwork laid by the prior Plan-it Oakville Program. This initiative had already established a robust strategy for the implementation of online services for planning, development applications, and inspections.

Furthermore, the presence of a dedicated team, responsible for orchestrating these efforts and managing the funding through a centralized department with the assistance of Finance, ensured the effective utilization of funds within established timelines while upholding consistency throughout the process.