



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Making Building Plans Available To the Public Electronically

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| Date: | April 19, 2007 |
| To: | Planning and Growth Management Committee |
| From: | Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building |
| Wards: | All |
| Reference Number: | P:\2007\Cluster B\BLD\CBO Office\PGM002 |

SUMMARY

This report provides information on the steps that will be taken by Toronto Building to ensure that building plans, which are permitted to be disclosed in accordance with the Division's Routine Disclosure Policy and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), are available to authorized requesters electronically and via the Internet.

Effective June 1, 2007, Toronto Building will inform individuals authorized to access building plans in accordance with MFIPPA and the Division's Routine Disclosure Policy that they may request copies of such plans in an electronic format.

Toronto Building will report in the fall of 2007 on necessary amendments to Chapter 363, Part II of the Toronto Municipal Code, to require the electronic submission of all required information, including building plans, in connection with applications to the Division, such as building and demolition permits. This change will enable Toronto Building to move forward with initiatives to make building plans more readily available electronically and via the Internet.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the receipt of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on January 18, 2007, Planning and Growth Management Committee requested the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building to report on steps needed, including amendments to existing by-laws, to ensure that building plans are available to the public on-line.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060925/it019a.pdf>

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pg/decisions/2007-01-18-pg01-dd.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

City Council, at its meeting on September 25-27, 2006, adopted a report dated September 20, 2006 which provided information on the development of the Division's policy respecting access and routine disclosure of building plans and changes to the policy in response to action taken by the Planning and Transportation Committee at its meeting on September 5, 2006.

In adopting the September 20, 2006 report, City Council endorsed the Division's Routine Disclosure Policy entitled Disclosure of Building Records and Plans. Changes requested by Council were incorporated and the policy was fully implemented by January 19, 2007. This policy was prepared in consultation with the City Solicitor and City Clerk. The policy includes detailed procedures that must be followed when processing requests for access to building plans held by Toronto Building to ensure access is permitted in strict accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

Therefore, the request by the Planning and Growth Management Committee at its meeting on January 18, 2007 to ensure building plans are available to the public on-line can only be considered and permitted in accordance with the Division's current access policy.

COMMENTS

Toronto Building's Routine Disclosure Policy applies to allow viewing and copying of building plans of all buildings but includes different procedures depending on the use of the building.

In all cases, a formal MFIPPA application is required to be submitted. A property owner, the management company responsible for the property, and/or the owner's authorized agent may access building plans of their own property, whereas the general public are only permitted access to building plans of residential buildings based on certain prescribed criteria.

Current Process for Providing Hard Copy Prints of Building Plans

Once it has been determined that a member of the public is authorized to access (viewing and copying) building plans pursuant to MFIPPA and the Toronto Building's Routine Disclosure Policy, the building plans are made available. The requester is encouraged to view the plans to determine whether they wish copies and if so, which ones. The requester is provided a copy of a standard letter from the City Clerk which provides notice to the requester regarding their obligations under the Copyright Act and to consult the designer for accuracy of the plans. When copies of large plans are requested, Toronto Building staff provides the requester with information about a third party printer, including reproduction cost. The third-party Printer picks up the City's copy of the building plans, copies the requested plans, notifies the requester regarding payment and pickup/delivery options, and returns the plans to Toronto Building.

New Process for Providing Building Plans Electronically

Toronto Building has confirmed the third-party Printers that currently are used to provide copying services to authorized requesters are also able to provide building plans in an electronic format upon request. Effective June 1, 2007, Toronto Building will advise authorized requesters that they may obtain building plans through the third-party Printer electronically, either by obtaining a computer disk of the requested plans or by having the plans E-mailed to them directly. The authorized requester will make payment directly to the Printer for the cost of producing the electronic plans and/or the number and size of prints requested.

Future Process for Providing Building Plans On-Line via the Internet

In order to make building plans available on-line via the Internet, Toronto Building must first have the plans on file in an electronic format. To accomplish this, we intend to report to the Planning and Growth Management Committee later this year on necessary amendments to the Municipal Code to require electronic submission of all building plans and other information required in support of applications for building, demolition and other permits and related applications. While we will continue to require hard copy plans to review and issue as part of the permit approval, the electronic information can be used to convey information back and forth between staff, the permit applicants and the design professionals. Upon finalization of an application, including the issuance of a permit, the permit applicant will be required to provide a final electronic version of the building plans and documents. This electronic information will form part of the City's official permit folders, which are currently being processed and maintained electronically using the Integrated Business Management System (IBMS).

Once electronic permit plans are attached to our electronic permit files, it will be possible to provide access to the building plans on-line via the Internet through the Division's Web site. Toronto Building staff are currently working on developing the interface and mechanisms to enable access to building plans via the Internet. Work will continue on this initiative this year in anticipation of the necessary amendments to the Municipal Code.

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SIGNATURE

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