

Development Application Review Fees

Date:	November 25, 2011
To:	Budget Committee
From:	Deputy City Manager Cluster B
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	BC11053

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of the detailed review of development application costs and recommend a strategy to recover the City's full costs associated with reviewing development applications (Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Site Plan, Condominium etc). The City's current costs for providing this particular service include a portion of City Planning's, and Legal Services costs. However, other divisions directly involved in processing development applications (Technical Services, Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Fire Services, Toronto Building, Solid Waste Management, and Toronto Water) do not recover their costs.

The Development Application Review Service provides direct benefits to identifiable beneficiaries and therefore, in accordance with the City's recently adopted User Fee Policy should be fully cost recovered. The Development Application Review Service represents an example of a user fee service for which the relevant programs have completed a comprehensive full costing model based on the principles of full cost recovery. Every effort has been made to identify direct, indirect and capital costs associated with providing this service. However, while the service satisfies the conditions for full cost recovery, only partial costs (approximately 66 percent) are currently being recovered. This means that in contravention of best practice, property taxes are being used to subsidize a service that should otherwise be recovered from the beneficiaries or user of the service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager Cluster B recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the Fee Schedule for Planning Applications set out in Appendix 1 to this report effective April 1, 2012 and that the Municipal Code Chapter 441-4 be amended accordingly;
2. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the necessary bills to give effect to these recommendations.

Implementation Points

Development review fees are increased annually for inflation on January 1st of each year. The new fee schedule set out in Appendix 1 will come into effect on April 1, 2012 to allow for the necessary budget approvals, programming of Information Business Management System (IBMS), updating of the Development Approval Application forms and provide appropriate notice to applicants.

Financial Impact

The average annual processing costs for reviewing development applications are approximately \$30.92 million. Compared with revenues of approximately \$20.38 million, the current development application review process fees are recovering approximately 66% of the City's total costs or under-recovering \$10.54 million annually. Development Application Review fees need to be increased 52% on aggregate in order to recover the City's total costs. However, as the *Planning Act* requires cost justification at the application type level some application types will require increases larger than the average to achieve full cost recovery and others will require smaller increases or reductions.

The new fee schedule will come into effect on April 1, 2012. Therefore, it is anticipated that additional revenues of \$6.75 million will be collected in 2012. The \$6.75 million is comprised of \$5.9 million in direct costs; \$0.7 million in indirect costs and \$0.15 million in capital costs. The revenues for the collection of direct and indirect costs totalling \$6.6 million have been included in the City's 2012 Recommended Operating Budget; Non-Program. The remaining \$0.15 million for capital costs will be directed to City Reserves to provide funding for capital projects that support development activity.

Once the budget is approved, the revenues will be re-directed to the various contributing programs' 2012 Approved Operating Budgets. The full year impact of the additional revenue will be submitted as part of the various programs' 2013 operating budget submissions.

The Current Development Application Review Fee Schedule includes a 7.5 % surcharge for Legal Services. This surcharge has been eliminated, and Legal Services costs have been included in the base fee.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On April 12, 2011, City Council adopted Executive Committee Report EX 4.10, Service Review Program and thereby specifically requested the City Manager "to undertake a User Fee Review to establish a user fee policy and framework that will ensure consistency in developing and administering the City's user fees program and report the outcomes to Executive Committee". City Council further requested that the City Manager include all Local Boards in the review.

Recommendation 3 of City Planning's Operating Budget Analyst Notes for 2011 Budget states that the Deputy City Manager responsible for City Planning report back to the Budget Committee in 2011 on the results of the detailed review of development application costs and an approach to increasing community planning and development application process fees in the future to allow for full cost recovery of all City costs related to the processing of community planning and development applications.

On September 26-27, 2011, City Council adopted Executive Committee Report EX 10.2, User Fee Policy. The report responds to City Council's request that the City Manager undertake a comprehensive user fee review to develop policy and framework that will ensure consistency in establishing and administering the City's user fees program.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In order to determine the full cost of providing the development application service the City retained Watson and Associates Ltd. in association with Performance Concepts consulting (Consultants) to develop a full-cost model and a more sustainable fee schedule for the development application review process. The Consultants have completed similar assignments based on the same principles for over 25 municipalities in Ontario, including many in the Greater Toronto Area.

Cost recovery performance of *Planning Act* applications has been remarkably consistent across the 905 GTA municipalities. Prior to their recent user fee reviews, many of these GTA municipalities recovered approximately 25-33% of their planning application processing costs (direct, indirect, and capital). In the past, processing costs not recovered through *Planning Act* user fees were funded by a combination of building permit user fee surpluses and the tax base. The rate structures that produced these outcomes appear to have been based on a combination of partial costing and market considerations.

Since 2005 GTA municipalities have been completing full cost user fee reviews for the development application review process resulting in average planning user fee increases across the GTA of approximately 200%.

COMMENTS

Development Application Review Fees

Municipalities in Ontario are authorized by the *Planning Act* to review and approve applications for all types of development. City Planning staff play the lead role in coordinating the review of development applications and consulting with communities to ensure the proposed developments contribute to Toronto's economic, physical, social and environmental quality of life. Development review is a horizontal service including staff from nine divisions who are directly involved in processing development applications. Several other Divisions provide internal indirect and external indirect services to these nine divisions. To date the fees charged to review and approve development applications cover portions of City Planning, and Legal Services staff costs. The costs for the other Divisions to review and approve development applications are not recovered nor included in the City's current fee schedule for Planning Applications.

Legislative Authority

The context for the Development Application user fee review is framed by the statutory authority available to the City to recover the costs of service. There are two sources of statutory authority that must be considered in determining the permissible recovery of development review services. The first is the *Planning Act*, which governs the imposition of fees for recovery of planning application processing. The second is the *City of Toronto Act* which governs the general imposition of user fees for municipal services provided.

Section 69 of the *Planning Act*, allows municipalities to impose fees through by-law for the purposes of processing planning applications. In determining the associated fees, the Act requires that: “The council of a municipality, by by-law, and a planning board, by resolution, may establish a tariff of fees for the processing of applications made in respect of planning matters, which tariff shall be designed to meet only the anticipated cost to the municipality or to a committee of adjustment or land division committee constituted by the council of the municipality or to the planning board in respect of the processing of each type of application provided for in the tariff.”

Part IX of the *City of Toronto Act* provides the City and local boards with broad powers to impose fees and charges via passage of a by-law. These powers, as presented in s.259 (1), include imposing fees or charges:

- “for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of it;

- for costs payable by it for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of any other municipality or any local board; and
- for the use of its property including property under its control.”

This section of the Act also allows the City to charge for capital costs related to services that provide persons with an immediate or deferred benefit. Moreover, the Act also embraces the broader recognition of cost inclusion with the acknowledgement that “the costs included in a fee or charge may include costs incurred by the City or local board related to administration, enforcement and the establishment, acquisition and replacement of capital assets”.

Methodology

The Consultant's utilized an activity based costing (ABC) methodology, by assigning an organization's resource costs through activities to the services provided to the public. One of the service channels provided by municipalities is the development application review process. Conventional municipal accounting structures are typically not well suited to the costing challenges associated with development application processing activities, as these accounting structures are business unit focussed and thereby inadequate for fully costing services with involvement from multiple City business units. An ABC approach better identifies the costs associated with the processing activities for specific application types and thus is an ideal method for determining full-cost development user fees.

An ABC methodology attributes processing effort and associated costs from all participating City business units to the appropriate user fee service categories. The resource costs attributed to processing activities and application categories include direct operating costs, indirect support costs, and capital costs. Once support costs have been allocated amongst direct business units, the accumulated costs (i.e. indirect, direct and capital costs) are then distributed across the various development application categories (and other non-development City services) based on the business unit's direct involvement in development application review activities. The assessment of each business unit's direct involvement in development application review activities is accomplished by tracking the relative shares of staff processing effort across each development fee category's sequence of mapped process steps.

Costs to provide this service were derived from the capacity analysis generated based on the processing estimates for each application type and included employment costs (e.g. salary, wages and benefits) as well as other direct costs (e.g. materials, supplies, etc.). Actual costs were obtained from Variance Reports provided by Corporate Finance. Corporate governance costs, such as the Mayor's Office, Council, Clerks Secretariat City Manager and Deputy City Manager's Office were not included in this costing assignment.

Step Costing Approach and Indirect Costs

The activity based costing review includes not only the direct service costs of providing activities but also the indirect support costs that allow direct service business units to perform these functions. Indirect costs are costs that cannot be readily identified and charged directly to the specific program, but are related to resources dedicated to support it. They have been allocated to programs on a basis consistent with the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI). They are classified as either internal support or external support costs. These indirect cost functions are then allocated to direct service delivery departments based on a set of cost drivers, which subsequently flow to development application fee categories according to staff effort estimates. Cost drivers are a unit of service that best represent the consumption patterns of indirect and corporate services by direct service delivery business units.

As such, the relative share of a cost driver (units of service consumed) for a direct department determines the relative share of support/corporate overhead costs attributed to that direct service department. Cost drivers are used for allocation purposes acknowledging that these business units do not typically participate directly in the development application review process, but that their efforts facilitate services being provided by the City's direct business units.

Capital Costs

The inclusion of capital costs in the model follows a methodology similar to indirect costs. For capital costs the replacement value of assets commonly utilized to provide direct business unit services are established. These business unit asset replacement costs are then annualized over the expected useful life of the respective assets to determine the annualized cost of assets. This annualized amount reflects the annual depreciation of the asset over its useful life based on current replacement values. This annuity is then allocated across all fee categories based on the capacity utilization of direct business units.

Strategy to Recover Full Costs

The average annual processing costs were compared with modelled revenues to determine the percentage the fees are recovering. To assess overall cost recovery levels historic development application user fee revenues were provided for the years (2005-2009). These historic revenues were adjusted to 2011 dollars by indexing the revenues based on user fee increases over the period. The adjusted average revenue per application type was subsequently applied to the annual application volume assumptions in the capacity analysis to generate aggregate revenues by development application category.

The effort estimates received were applied against average application volumes for the period 2005-2009 to assess the average annual processing time per position spent on development applications in aggregate and by application type. Annual processing effort

per staff position was compared with available processing capacity to determine overall service levels.

Full Costs to Provide Development Review Services

The following table summarizes the annual costs for reviewing development applications by participating division in millions \$ (2011)

Division	Direct Costs	Indirect Costs	Capital Costs	Total 2011	Percentage
City Planning	17.25	2.58	0.60	20.43	66.1
Toronto Building	0.30	0.04	0.01	0.35	1.1
Technical Services	2.21	0.22	0.05	2.48	8.0
Fire Services	0.18	0.01	0.00	0.19	0.6
Parks, Forestry and Recreation	1.99	0.06	0.00	2.05	6.6
Solid Waste Management	0.24	0.01	0.00	0.25	0.8
Transportation Services	2.51	0.15	0.02	2.68	8.6
Toronto Water	0.33	0.00	0.00	0.33	1.1
Legal	2.00	0.14	0.02	2.16	7.0
Total Costs	27.01	3.21	0.70	30.92	99.9

Table 1

Costs by Component

The following table summarizes the direct, indirect and capital costs for reviewing development applications.

Cost Component	Planning Applications (millions \$)	Percentage
Direct	26.98	87.3
Indirect	3.25	10.5
Capital	0.69	2.2
Total Full Costs	30.92	100
Modelled Revenues	20.38	
Net Position	-10.54	

Table 2

The \$20.38 million in modelled revenues include the 7.5% Legal Services Surcharge or \$1.53 million. The City is currently under recovering \$10.54 million for development review services. Based on the average number of applications and the average size of applications a revised fee schedule will allow the City to recover the full cost of delivering development application review services.

Average Planning Applications by Type

Table 3 summarizes the average number of applications reviewed per year by application type.

Planning Applications by Type	Applications
Re-zoning residential	30
Re-zoning non-residential	8
Re-zoning mixed use	40
Site plan - residential	130
Site plan – non-residential	128
Site plan – mixed use	168
Removal of H	8
Part Lot Control Exemption	20
Minor Variance	3005
Consent	500
OPA/rezoning combo	33
Subdivision	11
Condominium - Standard	63
Condominium – Conversion	1
Condominium – Conversion – 6 units or more	4
Condominium – new common elements and vacant land	16
Total Applications	4165

Table 3

Development Review Fees

The proposed fee schedule (Appendix 1) takes into consideration the direct, indirect, capital costs to provide development review services as well as the average size of applications by type. Graduated pricing has been introduced to recognize the different sizes of projects and the associated economies of scale.

The costing results include Legal Services costs for processing Section 37 Agreements. City Planning's time to negotiate community benefits under Section 37 are not included in the model. However, the costs of Legal Services are being recommended for recovery.

Periodic Review of User Fees:

In accordance with the City's User Fee Policy Development Application Review Fees will be reviewed and updated every four years. The review should re-evaluate the assumptions upon which the user fee is based, and should evaluate the degree to which the User Fee Policy is complied with. The fees will also be reviewed through the annual budget process in order to adjust for inflationary changes and the methods or levels of service delivery.

Municipal Comparisons

To further test the reasonableness of the results, planning application processes and average application processing effort estimates were compared with peer municipalities. Although it is difficult to directly compare municipalities, the Consultant's based on their previous experience concluded that the City of Toronto's results were competitive with its municipal peers.

Appendix 2 shows the current and proposed fees in comparison to other municipalities using example samples of development types rather than a comparison of fee schedules as each municipality's fee schedules have different components. The municipalities included in the comparison represent jurisdiction that have undertaken full cost planning fee reviews and have adopted varying degrees of full cost recovery within their fee schedules. The impact of the full cost recovery fee structure for the sample developments indicates that the City of Toronto fees would be similar to those in other Ontario municipalities.

The majority of large GTA municipalities are still functioning within green-field development patterns, unlike the City which is operating predominantly in a post-green-field or infill development environment. As a result some planning application types (e.g. Site Plan Control, Zoning Bylaw Amendment, etc.) are more effort intensive for infill development environments.

Service Standards

The full cost model developed by the Consultant's is based on the City's current level of service for reviewing and approving development applications. The City is committed to continually improving this important service, and has worked with both staff and the development industry to make a number of improvements over the last 5 years. These improvements are included as Appendix 3 to this report.

Service levels and standards for the last 10 quarters (January 2009 – June 2011) indicate that:

- Commenting Divisions (Toronto Building, Parks Forestry and Recreation, Technical Services, Transportation Services) respond to Community Planning with their comments within prescribed timelines 73% of the time.
- The average number of days from date of approval to registration of the agreement is 68 days.
- 54 % of Routine Applications are completed within 4-8 months
- 62% of Complex Applications are completed within 9-18 months

Service levels and standards are being refined for this particular service. In 2012 service standards and the actual performance levels that have been reached, and other relevant performance metrics will be posted on the City's website.

Staff continues to develop service improvements and find efficiencies in consultation with the development industry as part of the implementation of the City's Core Service review. The Divisions involved in reviewing development applications are partnering to find efficiencies by reducing non-value added steps. Process improvements related to electronic service delivery (circulations), condominium registration, resubmissions, performance measurement and customer service standards are aimed at reducing processing steps and timelines.

Waivers and Exemptions

Since 2000 Planning Application fees have been exempted for Non-Profit housing. At this time this report does not recommend any changes to the current Council approved practice of waiving planning fees for non-profit housing.

Consultation and Notice

The results of the detailed review of development application costs, and proposed strategy to recover the City's full costs associated with reviewing development applications were presented to the Toronto Chapter of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) on November 7, 2011. BILD members voiced concerns that fee increases should be coupled with service efficiencies.

City staff has been meeting with representatives from BILD throughout the year and continue to collaborate on service improvements to the Development Review Process.

Conclusions

The results of the comprehensive full costing model provide the basis for recovering the costs associated with reviewing and providing a decision on Development Applications. The costs of all of the Divisions directly involved in reviewing development applications as well as the indirect and capital costs are included in the new fee schedule. The impact of the full cost recovery fee structure indicates that the City of Toronto fees would be competitive with those in other Ontario municipalities.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Proposed 2012 Fee Schedule
Appendix 2 – Municipal Comparisons
Appendix 3 – Improvements to the Development Review Service

Appendix 1

Full Cost Planning Application Fee Schedule

Fee Category	2011 Fee	Recommended Fee for 2012	% Change	Notes
Official Plan Amendment	\$15,412.52	\$15,736.18	2.1%	Base Fee
Zoning By-law Amendment	\$6,187.91	\$15,621.30	152%	Base Fee
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$5.29 / m ²	103%	Residential – Additional Fee if building gross floor area is over 500 square metres
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$3.93 / m ²	50%	Non Residential– Additional Fee if building gross floor area is over 500 square metres
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$2.93 / m ²	12%	Mixed Use – Additional Fee if building gross floor area is over 500 square metres
	\$5,311.58	\$9,400.00	77%	Legal Services Preparation of Section 37 Agreement
Official Plan Amendment / Zoning By-law Amendment	\$15,412.52	\$15,736.18	2.1%	Base Fee
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$5.29 / m ²	103%	Residential – Additional Fee if building gross floor area is over 500 square metres
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$3.93 / m ²	50%	Non– Residential- Additional Fee if building gross floor area is over 500 square metres
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$2.93 / m ²	12%	Mixed Use – Additional Fee if building gross floor area is over 500 square metres
	\$5,047.65	\$9,400.00	86%	Legal Services Preparation of Section 37 Agreement
Holding By-law Amendment	\$6,165.01	\$8,623.00	40%	Base Fee
Plan of Subdivision Approval	\$23,118.78	\$27,567.00	19%	Base Fee
	\$513.74	\$870.00	70%	Additional Fee for each proposed lot.

Fee Category	2011 Fee	Recommended Fee for 2012	% Change	Notes
Approval of Description pursuant to the Condominium Act, 1998: New Condominium with Common Element/Vacant Land	\$15,412.52	\$7,249.10	-53%	Base Fee
	\$51.42	\$19.28	-62%	Additional Fee for each unit
Condominium Conversion	\$15,412.52	\$15,825.50	2.7%	Base Fee
	\$51.42	\$72.08	40%	Additional Fee for each unit
Part Lot Control Under Section 50 (5) of the Planning Act	\$9,249.03	\$3,800.00	-59%	Base Fee
	\$1,027.53	\$380.00	-63	Additional Fee for each unit
Site Plan Control (Approval of plans and drawings under Section 41 of the Planning Act)	\$2,568.82	\$4,500.00	75%	Base Fee
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$10.55 / m ²	305%	Residential – Additional Fee for the First 700 square metres of chargeable area (first 500 square metres are included in the base fee)
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$8.15 / m ²	217%	Next 700 square metres
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$5.30 / m ²	111%	Next 3,000 square metres
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$2.63 / m ²	1%	Square metres beyond 4,400 square metres
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$2.63 / m ²	1%	Non Residential– Additional Fee if building gross floor area is over 500 square metres
	\$2.60 / m ²	\$3.65 / m ²	30%	Mixed Use – Additional Fee if building gross floor area is over 500 square metres
Site Plan Agreement/ Revision	\$2,568.82	\$4,500.00	75%	Base Fee
Minor Variance Under Section 45 of the Planning Act	\$573.50	\$1,049.50	83%	Clear Title
	\$764.68	\$1,400.50	83%	Additions and Alterations to existing dwelling with 3 units or less
	\$1,720.52	\$3,148.55	83%	Residential Dwellings with 3 units or less
	\$2,227.90	\$4,075.00	83%	All other residential, commercial, industrial or institutional uses
			83%	"After the Fact" Variances: double the regular fee

Staff report for action on Development Application Review Fees

Fee Category	2011 Fee	Recommended Fee for 2012	% Change	Notes
Consent Under Section 50 (3) of the Planning Act	\$2,676.35	\$2,870.00	7%	Base fee for severing one lot into two, or establishing a new easement
	\$1,720.52	\$1,840.00	7%	Fee for each additional lot created
	\$1,338.18	\$1,430.00	7%	Validation of title, clear title, leases, mortgage discharge, lot additions, re-establishing easements
Committee of Adjustment Research Fee	\$150.00	\$150.00	0%	Subject to HST
Policy and Research Fee	\$60.00	\$120.00	100%	Subject to HST
Telecommunication Tower Application Fee	\$2,487.85	\$4,500.00	81%	Base Fee

Appendix 2

Municipal Comparison of Planning Fees

Development Application Type	Milton	Burlington	Oakville	Brampton	Mississauga	Vaughan	Richmond Hill	Markham	Ottawa	Hamilton	Toronto Existing (Rank)	Toronto Full Cost (Rank)
1,000 sq. m. Retail - Site Plan Rezoning	22,651	17,133	26,880	18,960	23,680	13,116	16,531	27,440	29,421	18,020	11,357 (11)	23,401 (5)
300 Unit Multi-Res. – Condominium and Site Plan	160,709	253,907	277,160	101,058	54,240	109,255	44,225	187,050	66,180	42,280	75,787 (7)	77,820 (7)
50 Single detached homes-Subdivision	17,676	66,262	41,995	37,095	20,300	25,710	27,562	56,780	76,071	21,400	48,806 (4)	71,067 (2)
10,000 sq. m. Industrial – Site Plan	4,878	18,924	39,060	17,130	24,160	41,810	8,516	25,400	31,741	11,070	27,269 (4)	29,485 (4)
10,000 sq. m. Office – Minor Variance	4,699	1,890	875	2,122	800	1,750	3,528	3,200	1,300	1040	2,228 (4)	4,075 (2)

Appendix 3

Development Review - Activities and Accomplishments

Standardized Business Practices

- Developed standard operating procedure manuals for staff to improve Quality Assurance and Quality Control
- Harmonized Site Plan Notice of Approval Conditions
- Standardized Letter of Credit Guidelines and forms
- Standardized Committees of Adjustment protocols and implemented best practices
- Developed a protocol for ‘Telecommunication Installation Applications’
- Standardized Parks Levy Fee Collection protocols
- Standardized Parkland Dedication report wording
- Standardized and published Urban Design Guidelines
- Established a Design Review Panel
- Posted online interactive Streetscape Manual
- Standardized wording in staff reports for Development Charge estimates
- Established financial controls for monitoring and tracking Section 37 and Section 45 funds
- Implementation of the Official Plan Amendment for Complete Applications
- Harmonized the City's parkland dedication by-laws
- Implemented additional Site Plan Control powers (OPA 66) through standardized submission requirements
- Created new protocols to ensure coordinated responses on the Toronto Green Standards and Toronto Green Roof By-law
- Rolled out standardized Municipal Infrastructure Agreement

Streamlined Processes

- Developed standard conditions for Site Plan, Sub-division and Condominium approvals to reduce timelines for coordinating comments from Divisions and finalize legal agreements
- Developed ‘Macros’ to improve document management and reduce timelines for inter-divisional comments to reach the Planning Division
- Implemented daily residential fast track permit service to meet or exceed Provincially legislated timeframes relating to the issuance of Building Permits
- Implemented commercial x-press service to meet or exceed Provincially legislated timeframes associated with the issuance of Building Permits
- Recommended business process changes (data collection, file tracking and management) to meet requirements of the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act
- Implemented changes to business processes required by changes to the Ontario Building Code Act (i.e. Two Stage Approval Process)
- Created a Soil and Groundwater Quality unit to provide reduced development review timelines
- Enhanced delegated authority of the Chief Planner to complete approvals for certain development applications (site plans, subdivision, consents and variances)

Improved Client Services

- Reduced the upfront portion of building permit fees from 100% to 60% for projects with a fee value in excess of \$20,000
- Implemented protocols for the direct disclosure of Building Permit Plans relating to Freedom of Information requests
- Implemented Gold Star Services for Business for major projects and Industrial Commercial and Institutional projects
- Initiated rebate programs to encourage green developments
- No longer require a Letter of Credit for Construction Water
- Implemented routine disclosure practices for planning applications to provide greater and harmonized access to planning files and reduced the need for Freedom of Information requests
- Completed 15 Avenue Studies and Mid-Rise Guidelines to support Avenue Development
- Developed a Tele Permit Inspection Service with 7 day a week service to request, cancel or re-schedule an inspection
- Reduced letters of credit for site plan from 120% to 75%; municipal infrastructure for subdivision from 100% to 65% and for Conditional Building Permits from 5% of construction value to 0% as part of the Toronto Helps initiative

Improved our Communications

- Created the Developing Toronto web site with technical standards and details including an online version of Development Guide “Building Toronto Together” to provide greater clarity and certainty for submission requirements and development standards, a listing of fees by application and division, Terms of Reference for required background studies
- Created and Issued on a regular basis Developing Toronto E-Newsletters to City staff and external stakeholders to improve the sharing of development related information
- Improved City Planning’s Web-site; (Monthly Application List, Major Development Portfolio, Application Status Page, Housing Demolition and Conversion and Archaeological Screening and Resources)
- Established an on-line Building Permit Status service
- Attend Toronto Chapter BILD meetings and serve as a single point of contact for development issues
- Recommended changes to the Planning Processes improving corporate credibility in the community at large and in the development industry including earlier and more frequent public consultation
- Developed information pamphlets ('Introduction to Building Permits' and 'Construction Requirements and Guidelines') that are available in more than 20 languages
- Increased availability of on-line Building-related forms, documents, and brochures
- Ensured consistent, accurate and clear responses to the public inquiries regarding ‘Development’ for the City’s 311 system
- Simplified the acquisition of business permits and licences for entrepreneurs, governments and third party business service providers looking to develop in Toronto for the City’s Biz Pal system
- Provided information monitors at Building Customer Service Counters at City Hall and all Civic Centres
- Posted schedules and agendas for Committee of Adjustment meetings