

Committee of Adjustment KPMG Service Delivery Model Review and Recommendation Implementation Update

Date: June 30, 2025

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Executive Director, Development Review

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Since 2021, City Planning staff have undertaken an extensive work program to improve services related to the Committee of Adjustment. The work program includes a series of projects to implement the recommendations of a third-party consultant intended to improve the public experience related to Committee of Adjustment hearings.

In May 2021, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the City Solicitor, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, and the Ombudsman, to report to Planning and Housing Committee on a consultant review of the Committee of Adjustment. As a result of this direction, City Planning retained KPMG, who conducted this review over the course of 2022. KPMG delivered its Final Report titled "Committee of Adjustment Review" in January 2023.

In February of 2023, staff summarized KPMG's review and recommendations and outlined a multi-year implementation plan to move those recommendations forward. The goal of these efforts was to increase public confidence in and satisfaction with the Committee of Adjustment review and hearing process and enable all users to effectively participate in the Committee of Adjustment. One of the recommendations by KPMG at that time was to conduct a comprehensive review of the Committee of Adjustment Service Delivery Model. In December 2023, staff retained KPMG to conduct this Service Delivery Model review which was completed in February 2025.

Concurrently with those reviews, staff have introduced various process and service improvements related to the Committee of Adjustment. The benefits of this work are already being realized. For instance, in December 2022, a newly submitted complete application would be scheduled for a hearing on average twelve weeks from the time of application intake. Since June 2023, that timeline has been reduced to an average of seven weeks. In addition, the previous backlog of applications that resulted from service disruption and fluctuating application volumes during the COVID pandemic has now been resolved.

The purpose of this report is twofold.

First, this report provides an update on the implementation of the 15 recommendations from KPMG's Final Report on the Committee of Adjustment Public Hearing Review since that report was presented to Council in February 2023. The previous report to Planning and Housing Committee in February 2023, summarized and accepted those 15 recommendations and laid out a work plan for implementation.

Second, this report presents the findings of KPMG's Committee of Adjustment Service Delivery Model review, and staff's workplan for advancing these new recommendations. This includes establishing an application streaming model to create a context for future decisions on application fees and application submission requirements. In early first quarter 2026, administration of Committee of Adjustment will move from the City Planning Division to the Development Review Division, to increase consistency in how development applications are reviewed by the City. Once those changes are complete, staff will review and confirm an approach to implementing KPMG's remaining organizational and public hearing recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Development Review recommend that:

1. The Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Development Review to use Attachment 3: Proposed Application Streaming, as the basis for public and stakeholder consultation and bring forward final application streaming recommendations in the second quarter of 2026.
2. The Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Development Review to report back to the Planning and Housing Committee on the status and results of the remaining KPMG implementation recommendations contained in this report in the second quarter of 2026.
3. The Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Development Review to consider updates to the Committee of Adjustment user fee descriptions that reflect zoning permissions adopted by Council for multiplexes, garden and laneway suites, and multi-tenant houses.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City Planning division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included within this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on May 5 - 6, 2021, City Council adopted item 2021.PH22.7 and directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the City Solicitor, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, and the Ombudsman, to report to the Planning and Housing Committee on a consultant review of the Committee of Adjustment.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.PH22.7>

At the February 2, 2022 meeting, Council adopted a report from the Chief Building Official to implement a one-stream preliminary review program for building permit applicants. Council requested the Chief Planner, in consultation with the Chief Building Official, to review application requirements for the Committee of Adjustment to consider requiring a preliminary zoning review to verify the minor variances and remove the option of a zoning waiver.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.PH30.7>

At the February 28, 2023 meeting, Planning and Housing Committee received a report from Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning. The report provided an overview on the KPMG-led review of how to improve participation in Committee of Adjustment public hearings. City Planning supported the review's recommendations and outlined a multi-year work plan to move forward with the numerous improvement opportunities identified by KPMG. The Planning and Housing Committee requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report back to the Planning and Housing Committee on the status and results of the implementation plan, as well as other items related to Committee of Adjustment operations, in the first quarter of 2024.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH2.5>

On January 29, 2024, Planning and Housing Committee adopted item 2024.PH9.13 and directed City Planning to report back on whether the City should adopt a by-law under Section 45 of the *Planning Act* to establish criteria that would limit what qualifies as a minor variance when applicants request additional height for large-scale multi-storey development proposals that already hold site-specific zoning permissions as an outcome of a private application for rezoning.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH9.13>

At the April 5, 2024 meeting, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report back to Planning and Housing Committee in Q1 2025 on the status and results of the KPMG Committee of Adjustment implementation plan.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH11.11>

At its meeting of December 5, 2024, Planning and Housing Committee, received a report from the Interim Chief Planner. The report did not recommend adoption of a criteria by-law pursuant to Section 45 of the *Planning Act* to establish additional criteria for minor variances where applicants seek additional height and density after a site-specific rezoning.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH17.12>

At City Council on April 24, 2025, Council directed City Planning to include a standard entry on Committee of Adjustment applications that would disclose whether one or more tenants are expected to be displaced by the application, and to provide that information as part of the materials posted on the Application Information Centre. Council also directed City Planning to include changes to the Committee of Adjustment notices to tenants at the impacted property, rather than solely to property owners.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.MM29.7>

BACKGROUND

The Committee of Adjustment is an independent, quasi-judicial administrative tribunal that hears and decides on applications under the *Planning Act* for Minor Variance, Consent, and the extension or enlargement of legal non-conforming uses under the *Planning Act*. It is currently administered by the City Planning Division but is independent from City staff and City Council.

Although the Committee of Adjustment makes decisions on planning approvals for what are generally smaller scale development projects, it plays an important role in the redevelopment and renewal of Toronto's housing stock and facilitates a wide variety of commercial, institutional and industrial developments. Over the last five years, between May 2020 and May 2025, the Committee of Adjustment has received an average of 3,270 applications and holds on average 95 hearings every year. The approvals granted by the Committee allow residents to accommodate changing household needs through home renovations or new construction, facilitate gentle intensification in neighbourhoods, and enable investment and the evolution of the city. The Committee of Adjustment is often the first and only touchpoint many Torontonians will have with a development approval process and allows applicants of all levels of experience to have small projects receive the necessary approvals for zoning compliance in a relatively quick and cost-effective manner.

Given the diversity of stakeholders and conflicting interests, there will always be some users unhappy with Committee decisions. While not everyone will get the outcome they want from the Committee, the public should generally have confidence in the process and satisfaction with how the decision was reached. Stakeholders should walk away from their experience with the Committee of Adjustment confident that the process was fair, transparent, accessible, efficient, and adhered to the principles of natural justice.

Although the Committee of Adjustment review and decision-making process is less complex than larger scale planning applications, there have been concerns raised by a variety of stakeholders that the process is too complex and inaccessible for many users. Some users have also expressed a lack of confidence and satisfaction in the process and do not believe the current practice consistently delivers quality decisions. Further, there have been concerns raised about the public's ability to effectively participate in the public hearings, both in the traditional in-person model and in the virtual hearing model which was introduced in June 2020.

As a result of these concerns, at its meeting on May 5, 2021, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the City Solicitor, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, and the Ombudsman,

to report to Planning and Housing Committee on results of a consultant review of the Committee of Adjustment. Council directed that the review should include the following topics:

- A review of the Committee of Adjustment findings in the End-to-End Review of the Development Review Process Final report dated August 16, 2019;
- The challenges of conducting virtual public hearings and an overview of current processes;
- A review of best practices and potential technological improvements;
- Recommendations respecting the establishment of an advisory committee;
- Undertaking public engagement;
- Promoting good conduct by applicant and general public participants;
- Scoping of supporting materials and information that would help applicants and the general public prepare for an effective representation at hearings; and
- Review of the Committee of Adjustment procedures and processes based on tribunal best practices and to ensure they support panel members in achieving procedural fairness and natural justice.

City Planning retained KPMG to conduct this review and the work began in February 2022. Broadly, the objective of the review was to identify recommendations to improve the ability and opportunity of the public and applicants to effectively participate in the hearing process. City Planning staff and the consultant team worked together to refine the scope of the review and develop a work plan.

From February to November 2022, KPMG conducted this review, holding extensive stakeholder consultations; completing leading practice research of Committee of Adjustments in five comparator jurisdictions, reviewing relevant documents provided by the City, industry representatives and residents associations and revisiting the Committee of Adjustment related recommendations contained in the KPMG End-to-End Review of the Development Review Process, which was completed for the City of Toronto in August 2019.

KPMG's Final Report on the Committee of Adjustment Public Hearing Review (2023) identified 15 recommendations to improve the public hearing process for members of the public and applicants and proposes a high-level implementation plan for their recommendations. The 15 recommendations included:

1. Develop and communicate a clear purpose statement to align stakeholders; around a shared understanding of the Committee of Adjustment;
2. Improve existing and develop new public-facing communications and resources to enhance participation;
3. Develop and promote an effective participation guide to empower applicants and members of the public;
4. Regularly engage with applicants and members of the public outside of the public hearing process;
5. Support equitable tenant participation in the public hearing process;
6. Consider refreshing application requirements for minor variance and consent applications;

7. Evaluate opportunities to provide more detailed reasons for Committee of Adjustment decisions;
8. Consider eliminating substantive revisions to applications following the distribution of the public notice;
9. Address the technical challenges of the virtual public hearing process;
10. Standardize hearing practices to improve transparency and predictability;
11. Implement quarterly members' meetings for panelist training and professional development;
12. Implement guidance directions to increase consistency within and across panels;
13. Implement commenting guidelines to improve consistency and enable more effective participation;
14. Establish KPIs to enable continuous improvement; and
15. Conduct a comprehensive review of the Committee of Adjustment's Service Delivery Model.

In February of 2023, staff reported to Planning and Housing Committee with a summary of KPMG's review and recommendations and outlined a multi-year implementation plan to move those recommendations forward. Since that time, staff have implemented video participation for applicants and public deputants at Committee of Adjustment public hearings and launched a panel member professional development program. Committee of Adjustment staff also worked with Toronto Building and Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) staff to allow appellants to submit TLAB appeal fees via credit card in November 2022.

The benefits of these improvements, alongside staff efforts in continuous improvement related to managing hearing schedules, are already being seen. Since the last report to Planning and Housing Committee in 2023, Committee of Adjustment administrative staff have continued efforts to improve and sustain application timelines. This has included an increase in frequency of hearings in Toronto and East York District to clear pending applications. The time from intake of a complete application to a hearing currently averages about seven weeks, with some variation across districts. This contrasts to the average timeline in December 2022 of twelve weeks. The previous backlog of applications resulting from service disruption and fluctuating application volumes during the COVID pandemic has also now been resolved.

One of the recommendations by KPMG in their 2023 report was to conduct a comprehensive review of the Committee of Adjustment Service Delivery Model (see Recommendation 15). In December 2023, staff retained KPMG to conduct this service delivery model review which was completed in February 2025. This report presents the findings of KPMG's Committee of Adjustment Service Delivery Model Review, and staff's workplan for advancing these recommendations. Staff are proposing to establish an application streaming model, to create a context for future decisions on application fees and application submission requirements. Also in the short term, administration of Committee of Adjustment will move from the City Planning Division to the Development Review Division. Once those changes are complete, staff will review and confirm an approach to implementing KPMG's remaining organizational and public hearing recommendations.

COMMENTS

SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL REVIEW (2025)

In its Committee of Adjustment Public Hearing Review study, KPMG recommended a review of the Committee of Adjustment's service delivery model as one of the 15 recommendations. The City retained KPMG to undertake this service delivery model review which began in December 2023 and was completed in January 2025. The review presents recommendations to improve the Committee of Adjustment's service performance in terms of organizational structure, process and public hearings. For optimal service, KPMG promotes the implementation of these recommendations as-a-whole. These include a City-wide, functional administrative structure, enhanced application intake and determination of completeness, a new streaming process, City-wide panel structure, a dedicated hearing room and shorter more frequent hearings.

Service Delivery Model Review and Recommendations

The objective of the service delivery model review was to identify an efficient and effective service delivery model to help address the challenges identified in the Public Hearing review. The intent of the review was to modernize long-standing Committee of Adjustment practices that have been in place across the city since amalgamation.

The scope of the service delivery model review included:

- The services delivered by the Committee of Adjustment and supporting partners;
- The processes, practices and procedures used to support service delivery;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Committee of Adjustment and support City partners; and
- Staff and panelist resourcing as well as service delivery costs.

The scope of the review did not include the policy or regulatory frameworks that determine Committee of Adjustment applications or a detailed examination of the technology that supports Committee of Adjustment operations.

The review took place in three phases:

Phase 1: Current State Evaluation

During Phase 1, KPMG worked closely with the City's Project Team to confirm objectives, scope and workplan and created a service delivery framework to review the current state of Committee of Adjustment services. This also included a review of data and documents related to the current service model. The background information and a service delivery framework was used to guide research activities and structure the development of different service delivery model options. These results are included in Appendix A and C of the KPMG final report.

Phase 2: Delivery Model Options Analysis

During Phase 2, KPMG developed, tested and refined nine different potential service delivery models with the City's project team. These options considered:

- Opportunities to organize staff and panelists around function, geography, application type, application complexity and applicant type;
- Different approaches to application streaming, including application type, application complexity and applicant need;
- The relationship between various administrative and panel structures;
- Variations in the average number of applications per hearing;
- Different approaches to application circulation and review, including its potential impact on resourcing and timelines; and
- The roles and responsibilities of Committee of Adjustment and commenting partner staff.

Attachment 1: KPMG Service Delivery Review, Appendix B includes a list of stakeholders engaged through the Service Model Delivery Review whose input supported the consultant in testing and refining these options.

Phase 3: Report

During Phase 3, KPMG synthesized their findings into a final report (found in Attachment 1: KPMG Service Delivery Review). During this phase, KPMG also completed additional engagement with the City's project team to share feedback from the staff engagement sessions and further refine their recommendations.

As a result of the KPMG Committee of Adjustment Review, eight recommendations were presented to address challenges and improve Committee of Adjustment performance. At a high level these improvements include:

- A City-wide, functional administrative structure;
- Enhanced application intake and determination of completeness;
- A new application streaming process;
- A City-wide panel structure;
- A dedicated public hearing room; and
- Shorter more frequent hearings.

These recommendations represent significant change to the Committee of Adjustment's Service Delivery model to aid in:

- Reducing application costs;
- Improving application processing timelines;
- Increasing organizational flexibility, including the ability to respond to changes in application volumes across the City;
- Enhancing the consistency and predictability of service delivery; and
- Improving the staff, applicant, panelist and public experience.

Ideally, KPMG has identified that the proposed recommendations, if implemented, have the potential to significantly reduce the City's application processing costs through improvements to:

- **Application intake:** Eliminating duplicate activities and reducing the error rate;
- **Application processing:** Adopting current Committee of Adjustment best practices; and
- **Circulation:** Eliminating duplicate activities; streaming applications; and standardizing commenting practices.

The KPMG report proposes a future administrative structure for the Committee of Adjustment which is detailed in Recommendations 1 and 2 from their Final Report below. The recommendations propose a change to each of the four Committee of Adjustment District offices to an "Application Processing Unit", each with a staff team that would provide three core services:

1. Application intake;
2. Application processing; and
3. Public hearing administration.

An additional "Public Hearing Unit" would comprise a staff team dedicated to facilitating public hearings, including in-person and virtual elements.

Below are the eight KPMG recommendations presented in the final report of the service delivery model review. KPMG provides a brief rationale for each recommendation with associated outcomes, and where relevant includes interim measures to consider pending full implementation. These recommendations are separated into three categories. The first three recommendations are related to organizational structure changes, the next three are process related improvements and the final three recommendations are improvements to the public hearings process.

Organizational Recommendations

1. Adopt a City-wide administrative structure to improve the flexibility and consistency of service delivery.

The Committee of Adjustment is currently divided into four geographic districts aligned with the City's Community Council areas.

KPMG has identified this setup as a barrier to efficiency, causing inconsistencies in timelines, processes, and workloads. To address these issues, KPMG recommends a city-wide administrative structure that:

- Integrates application intake into the Committee of Adjustment;
- Separates application processing and public hearing administration into distinct units;
- Creates four identical, city-wide application processing units for intake and processing; and
- Establishes a dedicated unit for public hearing administration.

This new structure aims to improve flexibility, consistency, and service predictability, and to reduce application timelines and costs.

2. Integrate application intake into the Committee of Adjustment to reduce duplication and intake error rates.

Currently, Committee of Adjustment applications make up less than one percent of the applications that are taken in by Toronto Building. KPMG has identified issues with application intake. To address this, KPMG recommends moving Committee of Adjustment application intake responsibilities to the recommended Application Processing Units within the Committee of Adjustment, to better ensure complete applications and to reduce duplication of effort. KPMG also suggests creating a publicly available Complete Application Terms of Reference in consultation with commenting partners.

Process Recommendations

3. Stream applications to reduce costs and improve the applicant, public and panelist experience.

Committee of Adjustment applications are circulated for review and comment by eight different City commenting partners. This circulation and commenting process varies across Committee of Adjustment districts. Circulation and review is the most effort-intensive component of the Committee of Adjustment process. KPMG identified that in addition to high costs and inconsistent commenting practices current commenting practices also result in challenges such as duplications of effort from commenting partners, unclear standards from commenting partners and missed deadlines. KPMG recommends that the City consider adopting a new application streaming model for circulation and review of Committee of Adjustment applications.

4. Undertake a comprehensive review of application requirements and application forms.

Similar to the Public Hearing Review recommendations, KPMG recommends that the City should consider undertaking a comprehensive review of its application requirements and application forms, that considers:

- Time and cost to applicants, including costs associated with any supporting consultants or studies;
- Proportionality to the size and complexity of different applications;
- Impact on Committee decision making;
- Impact on public participation;
- Efficiency of review; and
- Alignment with associated applications, like building permits (reviewing requirements).

5. Develop standard operating procedures to improve consistency and predictability.

Through the fee review KPMG identified significant differences across Committee of Adjustment districts related to process steps, roles and responsibilities, workload management, and tools and platforms used to support service delivery. To address these

challenges and facilitate the implementation of a new organizational structure, KPMG recommends the City develop standard operating procedures including intake, completeness review, circulation, notice, hearing preparation and post hearing activities, roles and responsibilities of Committee of Adjustment staff and commenting partners, and tools and platforms used to support service delivery. KPMG recommends adopting current Committee of Adjustment best practices as a starting point for the proposed standard operating procedures.

Public Hearing Recommendations

6. Adopt a City-wide panel structure to improve the public hearing process and organizational flexibility.

The Committee of Adjustment's 35 citizen members are currently divided into four geographic panels, each limited to hearing applications from their own district. KPMG has identified that the district-based panel structure is a significant barrier to performance including inconsistent public hearing practices across districts, long hearing durations, inconsistent public hearing practices and panelist workloads. It also identified that the geographic panel structure limits the number of panelists available to participate in a hearing. To improve efficiency, KPMG recommends replacing district panels with a single, City-wide panel structure.

7. Cap hearing lengths and increase hearing frequencies to improve participation in public hearings.

In 2023, the average length of a public hearing was approximately six to seven hours, though there were significant variations across districts. KPMG recommends that to address hearing length challenges the City should consider capping public hearing agendas to 20-25 items.

KPMG provides that operationalizing shorter, more frequent hearings would require the implementation of many of the other recommendations, including a dedicated public hearing unit, a City-wide panel structure and dedicated public hearing rooms. KPMG suggests that hearing length changes and frequencies would require a phased approach with the recruitment and appointment of new panel members.

8. Develop a business case to evaluate the benefits of a single, centralized hearing room.

Currently, Committee of Adjustment hearings are held at four Civic Centres in shared spaces with varying equipment and technology, leading to inconsistent practices, scheduling issues, and added setup time. KPMG recommends exploring a single, dedicated, centrally located hearing room to improve consistency, flexibility, frequency, and reduce costs. As a first step, the City should develop a business case evaluating costs, travel impacts, benefits, and effects on participation of a centralized dedicated public hearing space. Additionally, the City should consider improving the current model by securing permanent, well-equipped spaces at each Civic Centre.

Staff Response and Recommendations Arising from the KPMG Service Delivery Staff Review

Staff have reviewed the recommendations provided by KPMG through their service delivery model review. Staff generally agree with the recommendations, recognizing many potential benefits to the implementation of all organizational, process and public hearing improvements as identified in the KPMG final recommendations including improvement to the public, applicant, and panelist experience. These transformational changes would also centralize services that have operated on a district-based model since amalgamation.

Notwithstanding potential benefits, staff have also identified high level challenges to the implementation of these recommended improvements, most notably those organizational changes and changes to the public hearing model that shift from a geographic district-based structure to a centralized, city-wide structure. Although Committee of Adjustment hearings occur via hybrid in-person/virtual format, the move from a centralized model may nonetheless create challenges for the public to attend hearings in person. There is also a perception that district-based Panel members make decisions that are informed by a deeper understanding of the district area. Further, it is difficult to find dedicated hearing space within the City to hold Committee of Adjustment meetings and most City-owned meeting venues in central locations are already operating at capacity. To implement the recommended improvements, more staff may be required to facilitate a Public Hearing Unit, potentially creating additional pressure on the service's operating budget.

To implement KPMG's recommendations, staff will need to develop an implementation plan that mitigates or addresses potential challenges. This would include developing a business case exploring the feasibility of designating one dedicated hearing room in a centrally located, transit-accessible facility. In the proposed centralized model, KPMG also recommends increasing the frequency of hearings. More frequent hearings are intended to reduce the typical length of hearings, to benefit the experience of hearing participants and panel members. However, more frequent hearings may pose challenges for commenting partners.

Working with KPMG's recommendations, staff have identified four options on how to proceed with improvements to Committee of Adjustment's service delivery model. The four options are summarized in Attachment 2: Committee of Adjustment Service Delivery Options. The options enable a phased implementation of the eight recommendations, including an opportunity to set aside individual recommendations that may not be practical to implement or where challenges outweigh potential benefits.

The four options are:

- **Option A:** Implement All KPMG Service Delivery Recommendations Immediately
- **Option B:** Implement KPMG Process Recommendations and Maintain Current District-Based Geographic Model with Increased Hearing Frequency and Additional Toronto and East York Team
- **Option C:** Implement KPMG Recommended Process Improvements but Maintain Current District-Based Geographic Model
- **Option D:** Implement Committee of Adjustment District Application Intake but no other changes

Staff support moving forward with Option C at this time. Under Option C, staff will work with stakeholders to consult on, determine, and implement an application streaming model. In an effort to reduce errors and duplication of work, staff will also determine the feasibility of a shift in application intake from Toronto Buildings to the Committee of Adjustment and determine an implementation plan to support that change. This will include evaluating technology to support application intake as the City continues to expand its online services.

Option C will also support the implementation of KPMG's recommended process improvements including application streaming, a review of application requirements and forms and standard operating procedures for the Committee of Adjustment processes, staff and commenting partners.

In addition to the changes to the service model reflected by Option C, staff will implement a change in reporting relationship of Committee of Adjustment staff from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to the Executive Director, Development Review Division. This organizational change will better align the Committee of Adjustment service with the overall development review service of the Development Review Division. Committee of Adjustment applications and decisions are a development review process and there are organizational advantages to operating this service in the same division as other development review services. Staff will form an implementation plan in 2025 to carry out this divisional move in the early first quarter of 2026.

The next steps to be undertaken in implementing Option C are summarized below.

1. Application Streaming

Staff have identified possible categories for streaming of Committee of Adjustment applications that can be implemented to support recommended process changes by KPMG. This includes separating applications into four streams: Priority Project; Residential Renovations and Additions; Residential New Builds; and Complex Applications. The streaming concept is described in more detail in Attachment 3: Proposed Application Streaming Categories.

Application streams could aid in setting application submission requirements, fee categories, application review and commenting practices, and hearing agenda management, to more efficiently and consistently match the time and resources invested by applicants, the public, and staff in the application process to the nature of an application.

The application requirement of a zoning waiver or a zoning review by applicants will also be considered as part of application streaming, dependent on the type and complexity of the application. Staff consideration of the existing zoning waiver program is discussed further below.

Staff propose to present and consult with Committee of Adjustment stakeholders on the details of each category in Attachment 3 and the potential improvements to Committee of Adjustment processes as a result of application streaming. Staff plan to undertake this

consultation in the Fall of 2025 and report back in Q2 of 2026 on the outcome of the consultation and with a recommended proposal for application streaming.

2. Review of Application Requirements and Forms

Staff are in the process of revising the Committee of Adjustment application form. This includes collecting information from applicants on any potential impacts to existing tenants. Staff will also review current Committee of Adjustment application requirements, any revisions to these requirements and how requirements may relate to proposed application streams.

3. Standard Operating Procedures

Staff will begin to outline standard operating procedures for Committee of Adjustment administrative processes, roles and responsibilities of Committee of Adjustment staff, tools and platforms used to support service delivery and role of commenting partners.

4. Application In-take

As discussed above, staff from the Committee of Adjustment and Toronto Building will collaborate to assess the feasibility of shifting application intake responsibilities from Toronto Building to the Committee of Adjustment, in response to KPMG's recommendation. Together staff will also develop an implementation plan to support this potential change.

This assessment will consider the application intake process and also the broader range of services Toronto Building currently provides in support of Committee of Adjustment applications. This includes responding to enquiries, collecting application and appeal fees and administering application refunds, managing correspondence and providing zoning information, as outlined in the Service Level Agreement between Toronto Building and City Planning.

In addition, Committee of Adjustment and Toronto Building staff will evaluate how shifting the responsibility of application intake aligns with opportunities for technology and process improvements, as well as strategies to support applicants in submitting complete applications. This will involve reviewing current intake processes to improve the quality of submissions and ultimately enhance application quality, particularly in the context of the City's ongoing improvements to online application intake services.

5. Geographic Model

Option C maintains the current geographic district operations including hearing locations, administration, and panel member allocation while implementing process related improvements. Once the change in the Committee of Adjustment's reporting relationship is complete, further consideration of district-based service delivery geographic changes can be undertaken, as part of the overall organization of the City's development review function.

6. Dedicated Hearing Space

As identified in the KPMG Service Delivery Model Review, each District Committee of Adjustment office holds public hearings at its respective Civic Centre. The Committee of Adjustment does not have access to dedicated space in City buildings which creates a challenge in augmenting the frequency in which hearings can be held based on space availability.

As recommended by KPMG, staff will create a business case to determine the availability of a dedicated hearing space to support a centralized model for the Committee of Adjustment. In the interim, to enhance the efficiency and frequency of Committee of Adjustment hearings, staff will explore opportunities to establish a dedicated hearing space for the Toronto and East York District, which faces the highest volume of applications and the most significant challenges in securing adequate hearing space.

Implementation of Recommendations

Staff foresee full implementation of KPMG's service delivery recommendations as an incremental process, beginning with a move of Committee of Adjustment administration to the Development Review Division and recommended process improvements. These will ultimately lead to a more fulsome consideration of KPMG's organizational recommendations and public hearing recommendations.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE 15 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM KPMG'S PUBLIC HEARING REVIEW (2023)

In February 2023, staff reported to Planning and Housing Committee on several improvements, including the introduction of video participation for applicants and public deputants at Committee of Adjustment public hearings and the launch of an enhanced panel member professional development program. Committee of Adjustment staff also worked with Toronto Building and Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) staff to allow appellants to submit TLAB appeal fees via credit card in November 2022.

Staff have implemented four of the fifteen recommendations and expect an additional four to be completed by the end of Q3 2025. The remaining seven recommendations will be part of the 2026 work program.

Public Participation Initiatives in Progress

Staff have drafted a Committee of Adjustment Purpose Statement and Service Charter that has been made available for public feedback through an online survey in April 2025 and at the Annual Committee of Adjustment Stakeholder meeting in May 2025. The survey was promoted through a City Planning-led social media campaign. During this period, the survey received approximately 8,700 online views and generated 377 completed responses. Revisions are currently being made to the draft Purpose Statement and Service Charter based on the input received, and the final version will be shared on the Committee of Adjustment webpage and future documents by the end of the third quarter of 2025.

To make it easier for the public to understand how to engage in the Committee of Adjustment process, staff have also redesigned the Notice of Hearing and Notice of Decision using plain language principles. These updated notices will be implemented in Q3 2025.

Staff refreshed the Committee of Adjustment webpages in April 2024 to ease navigation and improve usability.

To promote equitable tenant participation, staff are introducing updates to application forms to identify tenant presence earlier and encouraging property owners to proactively share information.

The release of the Public Participation Handbook is expected by the end of the third quarter of 2025. The new Public Hearing Handbook has been developed to increase public and applicant understanding of the Committee of Adjustment process. The handbook will provide guidance on the Committee of Adjustment hearing process, including a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section that aims to address common inquiries from applicants and the public. The Public Hearing Handbook provides clear and concise answers to help users better understand Committee of Adjustment processes, requirements, and expectations. By offering readily accessible information in a straightforward format, the handbook will serve as a resource to enhance transparency, reduce confusion, and support more informed participation throughout the Committee of Adjustment process.

Public engagement efforts have also been strengthened and staff are making efforts to regularly connect with applicants and community members outside of hearings. Staff have continued to host an annual in-person Committee of Adjustment update and feedback meeting, now in its second year, and are expanding these efforts through the inclusion of two semi-annual training sessions which will include a Commenting Partner Drop-In session for applicants and a Committee of Adjustment 101 session for the public, both planned to launch in the fall of 2025.

A user-friendly online registration portal for hearings was launched in May 2024, simplifying access for applicants and the public to register as a speaker. Technical enhancements, including better audio-visual setups, have been implemented, while screen sharing remains restricted to maintain document integrity.

Staff have explored but ruled out in-hearing virtual breakout rooms due to equity and logistical challenges in a hybrid format. Agenda tracking tools have also been evaluated, with collaboration ongoing to develop tailored solutions that better suit Committee of Adjustment's operational needs.

Other Initiatives in Progress

At this time, several additional initiatives are underway to address the remaining consultant recommendations from the 2023 KPMG hearing review report.

Staff have informally made partnerships with relevant City Divisions to establish data monitoring on specific Committee of Adjustment application types or trends. Staff will

continue to build these partnerships to create more formalized data monitoring for Committee of Adjustment applications.

A review of application requirements for minor variance and consent applications is currently being conducted and will be evaluated with application streaming. This work will include an analysis of zoning waiver practices and consideration of mandatory zoning reviews in streams for special projects, standard and complex applications (See Attachment 4: Waiver Data Summary).

Committee of Adjustment staff have also been evaluating what constitutes a “complete application,” with particular attention to mandatory submission components. Following Council direction in item PH.30.7 (2022), staff were asked to explore the feasibility of requiring a Preliminary Zoning Review, commonly referred to as a zoning review, for all applications, thereby eliminating the existing option for a zoning waiver.

To support this initiative, Committee of Adjustment staff launched a project in 2025 to assess the effectiveness and utility of zoning reviews. As part of this evaluation, staff collected and analyzed data on the usage of zoning waivers versus zoning reviews. The findings, which are included in Attachment 4. The data reveals that a vast majority of applicants already voluntarily choose to undergo a zoning review rather than relying on a zoning waiver. These insights will inform staff recommendations regarding the potential integration of zoning reviews as a standard application requirement.

As part of the broader application streaming initiative described above, staff are also proposing that zoning waivers could be limited to a Simple Application stream, requiring a mandatory zoning review for more complex submissions. This approach would ensure a more tailored and proportionate application process based on the complexity and scale of each case. Staff will report further on the requirements on a zoning waiver or review along with application streaming in Q2 of 2026.

Quarterly training sessions for panelists are continuing annually, with positive impacts on consistency and confidence of Members in the hearing process. Updates to the Panel Member Manual and implementation of guidance directions have further improved standardization.

Future Initiatives

Staff are continuing to address the remaining KPMG implementation recommendations which will be included as part of staff’s future work program for 2025 and be including in a report back to Planning and Housing Committee in Q2 of 2026. Several of these recommendations are also related to service delivery improvements and require further determination on service delivery changes to proceed. These include:

- Exploring the feasibility of limiting substantive revisions to applications after the issuance of a Notice of Hearing to ensure sufficient time for review;
- Determining how more detailed reasons for decisions might be provided, while still maintaining the ability for the public to watch hearings in full via the City’s YouTube channel;

- Developing standardized commenting guidelines to improve the quality and clarity of input received;
- Identifying Key Performance Indicators; and
- Building a formalized data monitoring framework in partnership with relevant City Divisions.

COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT APPLICATION FEES

In May 2025, Council adopted a report on the Development Application Fee Review. In that report, it was anticipated that staff would provide further information on Committee of Adjustment application fee increases in this report. At this time, a Committee of Adjustment fee increase is not proposed. Therefore, Committee of Adjustment service costs will continue to be under-recovered.

As discussed in this report, application streaming may create opportunities to better adjust fees to costs and to deliver service more efficiently. If appropriate, staff will bring forward changes to the Committee of Adjustment fee structure along with an application streaming model.

Staff will also consider updates to the Committee of Adjustment fee category descriptions, to reflect zoning permissions adopted by Council for multiplexes, garden and laneway suites, and multi-tenant houses. These updates can be incorporated along with cost-of-living adjustments to application fees on January 1, 2026. The intent of such updates is to apply the same application fees to, garden and laneway suites, and multi-tenant houses, and multiplexes as apply to residential dwellings with three units or less. These building types are currently subject to a higher fee category.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: KPMG Service Delivery Model Review - Final Report

Attachment 2: Committee of Adjustment Service Delivery Options

Attachment 3: Proposed Application Streaming Categories

Attachment 4: Waiver Data Summary