



## Motion Memorandum

**SUBJECT:** Site Engineering Resourcing Update and Immediate Resource Needs Related to Development Review

**TO:** Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Cttee.

**FROM:** Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, Councillor Kelvin Galbraith and Councillor Paul Sharman

**Date to Committee:** December 8, 2022

**Date to Council:** December 13, 2022

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### **Motion for Council to Consider:**

Direct the Director of Engineering Services to provide a staff report in January 2023 with options and recommendations related to the immediate resource requirements of the Site Engineering section to effectively deliver the fundamental components for timely review and processing of development application approvals. This report is to include, but not be limited to the following:

- Identification of the resources required to meet Site Engineering's current backlog and projected ongoing high volume of development applications
- Analysis of resources (staffing/external contracted services) and related operating costs and recommendations based on objective of achieving full fee recovery. To the extent that any net tax-supported funding is required, identify the impact of the recommendations of the report on the 2023 Proposed Operating Budget

Direct the Executive Director of Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility and the Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services to provide a report back in Q2 on the following:

- An update on all active development applications by application type and application status inclusive of backlogged files and estimated timelines for completion
- Similar to the Site Engineering report in Jan 2023, present options and recommendations to address the immediate resource needs related to other key

functional areas within the development application approval process, including but not limited to Transportation Planning, Planning Implementation and Forestry. The report should also address the known and anticipated impacts on development application processing of new Provincial legislation Bill 109, proposed Bill 23 and any other Provincial legislation changes that may be proposed in the intervening time.

**Reason:**

As members of Council may be generally aware based on feedback received from the development community and residents, the Site Engineering (SE) group of the Engineering Services department has come under extreme pressure in recent months. Notwithstanding the addition of three (3) additional full-time staff resources in 2022 (for a total of ten (10) staff), our SE team continues to experience an extremely high workload in development applications in both volume and complexity of applications received, as well as dealing with the added challenge of a general reduction in application quality resulting in additional technical review time. In addition, to the three (3) new staff, the Director of Engineering has also engaged the services of an external engineering consulting firm to assist with development review over the past year. The option of adding additional fee funded internal resources along with expanded external contracted services is also included in the staff direction.

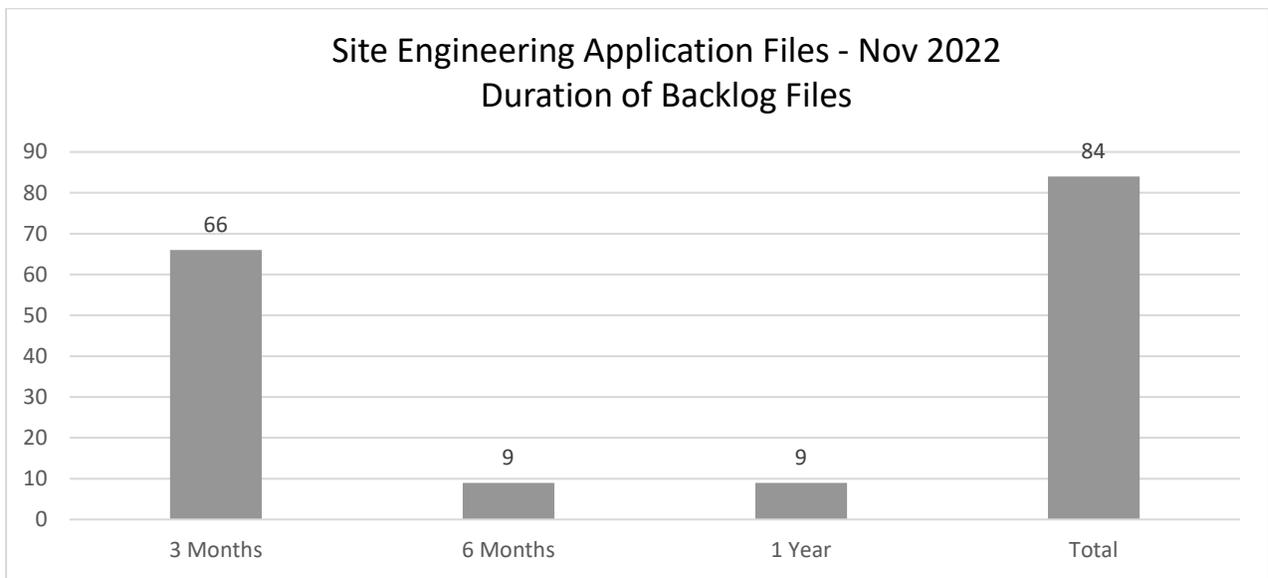
Exhibit 1 below provides a high-level summary of the SE application review backlog status as at Nov. 2022, which clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of files yet to be reviewed have been submitted in the last 3 months (66 of 84 files). Council will note that within SE there are 14 different application types and all types do entail a significant degree of due diligence before sign-off by staff.

Exhibit 2 below provides a simple illustration of the due diligence level of site engineering review for a typical major development (new 13 storey multi-residential building) as compared to application review functions by other departments.

Clearly the City is not alone and is at a crisis point of trying to continuously compete with other municipalities, consultants and contractors to attract and retain highly skilled and trained engineering technical staff. The reality is we are now facing long approval lead times and an increase in the backlog of new applications waiting for review as noted below in Exhibit 1.

It is important to note that in addition to both the backlog files and the applications currently under review (which include approximately 50 Site Plans, 10 Subdivisions and 165 Grading and Drainage Clearance Certificates (GDCC's) in 2022 to date), SE staff are currently working on approximately 175 approved Site Plans, 12 approved Subdivisions and 600 approved GDCC's which remain open files, having been approved over the past several years. These approved open files are on-going and require the involvement of SE staff for project administration and inspection.

**Exhibit 1 – Summary of Current Status of Engineering Applications in Backlog**



**Exhibit 2 – Illustration of Site Engineering Application Document Review Requirements**



| Site Engineering Reports |

Other Dept. Reports |

### **Outcome Sought:**

Director of Engineering to report back to EICS Committee in January 2023 with further analysis, options and recommendations on resources including HR related attraction and retention measures required within the Site Engineering function. In so doing, the overall intent for Council's consideration of the report is to support the efficient delivery of the development application review.

As Council is aware, significant work is underway and nearing completion related to the SDAF project. In January 2022 the Province of Ontario launched the \$45 million Streamline Development Approval Fund (SDAF) Initiative. Ontario's 39 largest municipalities each received an allocation from the province to help modernize, streamline and accelerate processes for managing and approving housing applications. The City of Burlington is eligible to receive up to \$1 million in funding.

The SDAF work aligns with our Vision to Focus objectives to deliver acceptable development and permitting timelines and effectively support the growth of the community and City's property tax base. The work completed to date under the SDAF has fully integrated a Lean Six Sigma process improvement methodology and the results are positive and will be shared with Council as part of a final report on phase 1 in early 2023. As this time, there has been no confirmation of a Phase 2 SDAF program, however the City will be pursuing if the program is offered again by the Province.

In addition to the above, this motion memo also directs staff to provide a report back in Q2 on the following:

- An update on all active development applications by application type and application status inclusive of backlogged files and estimated timelines for completion
- Similar to the Site Engineering report in Jan 2023, present options and recommendations to address the immediate resource needs related to other key functional areas within the development application approval process, including but not limited to Transportation Planning, Planning Implementation and Forestry

The reality is that 2023 and for the foreseeable future it is expected to be an extremely and demanding period for the City related to processing and approval of development applications. New Provincial legislation introduced under Bill 109 and expected under Bill 23, will have significant impacts on the City's ability to process applications in a timely manner with full cost recovery from the development industry.

A Q2 2023 report on the status of all development applications will provide Council with an opportunity to consider the current state of development application processing taking into consideration the impact of SDAF changes and recent legislation. The report will address the resource needs across all functions and will set the stage for a fulsome discussion on our 2023 and future needs as well as performance expectations for development application review processing.

Overall, the quality of the City's land use development over the years can be attributed to our sound and robust development review process. The many new factors, including changes in Provincial legislation (Bill 109 and Bill 23), the scope and scale of residential development and unprecedented industry-wide human resources challenges, are now priorities in what could be characterized as our 'perfect storm' related to future community growth and development. While clearly a broader strategy is required as part of our update to V2F, a first step is to place an immediate focus on Site Engineering for the reasons noted above.

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

(check those that apply)

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Improve integrated city mobility
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Motion Seconded by: as required

Share with Senior Staff

Approved as per form by the City Clerk,

Reviewed by the City Manager - In accordance with the Code of Good Governance, Council-Staff Relations Policy and an assessment of the internal capacity within the City to complete the work based on a specific target date (quarter/year).

**Comments:**

City Clerk:           Approved as per Form

City Manager:       Reviewed and Approved