

Concierge Pilot Program Backgrounder

Name: Pilot Concierge Program

Pilot End Date: 9 months from commencement to allow for development applications to go through the site plan control process

Program Criteria: Applications will qualify for the pilot program if they meet a number of criteria which establish them as ideal candidates for the program.

The pilot will focus on applications in the site plan approval phase. Focussing on applications in the site plan approval process will ensure that projects are viable and allow the Economic Development Officer (EDO) acting as the concierge to focus on getting projects over the line to construction.

Projects should have an identifiable impact on local economic development and growth. The types of developments which could fulfil this criterion include:

- Local business expansions
- New businesses and/or industrial development which align with the five key local economic development sectors (manufacturing, engineered products, agriculture, arts/culture/heritage, and tourism)
- Large scale residential development
- Other projects which have an identifiable economic impact

The decisions regarding which projects should be included as part of the pilot program should be made together by Planning and Economic Development. Ideally, this will be the EDO acting as the concierge in conjunction with the Development Planning Supervisor with input from the Managers of Planning and Economic Development.

Prioritizing projects in this way is supported by the Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022, which outlined as an action item the development of a business pilot program focussing on business expansion and start up. This project, however, focusses only on the development application aspect of business growth.

Program Overview:

The pilot program responds to the direction from the Economic Recovery Task Force aimed at stimulating the local economy in its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the areas of focus for stimulus was the development sector and streamlining the approvals process for development applications. The goal of this program is to assist applicants going through the site plan approval process by piloting their application in order to shorten the timeline in which these types of applications are approved.

At the beginning of the pilot, the EDO acting as the concierge and the Development Planning Supervisor will identify existing applications which should be included in the program on the basis of the criteria outlined above. The EDO will reach out to existing applicants in the site plan approval phase to initiate a point of contact and introduce the concierge program. New applicants which are deemed suitable for the program will be provided with the EDO's contact information and information about the role when their application is received.

The EDO will provide a point of contact for the applicant during the site plan approval process. The intention is for the EDO to act as a bridge between the applicant and the planner working on the file and to troubleshoot issues that may be occurring which are delaying the process, either on the City's side or on the applicants.

During the site plan control process, the applicant will be invited to reach out to the EDO if they have questions about the status of their application. The EDO will be able to access the application tracking spreadsheet created by Planning staff and provide updates to the applicant. The EDO will also liaise with Planning staff as necessary. The EDO will also work to encourage the applicant to submit the required documentation in a timely manner so that the application can move forward, if, for example, Planning staff advise that certain reports or studies are missing.

Evaluation Criteria:

Teamwork and communications between departments

Customer satisfaction: Measured through survey/follow up with the applicant after approval

Timelines: Measurement of length of time from submission to approval based on similar applications

Number of approved applications