



## Planning Advisory Committee Report

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**Report Number:** ED2022-041  
**Meeting Date:** July 6, 2022  
**Title:** Development Concierge Program  
**Description:** Overview of the Development Concierge Program  
**Type of Report:** Regular Meeting  
**Author and Title:** Lindsey Schoenmakers, Economic Development Officer - Business

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### Recommendation:

That Report ED2022-041, **Development Concierge Program**, be received for information.

**Department Head:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Legal/Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Administrative Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Background:**

The Concierge Pilot Program was developed in response to recommendations from the Economic Recovery Task Force in the summer of 2020. The recommendations of the Task Force were to increase efficiency and service delivery times for planning applications to assist with recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Concierge Pilot Program was a nine (9)-month pilot program for development applications in the site plan process with an identifiable impact on local economic development and growth. The pilot was initiated in October 2020 and concluded in July 2021 with seven (7) planning applications taking part in the program. During the initial pilot, an Economic Development Officer acted as a concierge for these files and a technical team was formed to oversee the implementation of the program. The majority of files in the program had already begun the site plan approval process when the program was initiated. Of these files, one was fully approved and a site plan agreement executed when the pilot program concluded.

At the conclusion of the pilot, the technical team evaluated the program in order to determine its success and any next steps. The team came to the following conclusions:

- In general, applicants liked and appreciated having a dedicated Economic Development Officer (EDO) attached to their file and specific resources allocated to ensuring that their project moved expeditiously through the Planning approvals process.
- There was a positive increase in collaboration between Planning and Economic Development staff.
- Focus on the site plan approval process was not effective as it meant that the EDO acting as the concierge was coming into the approvals process part way through and it required time and resources to bring them up to speed on the project. Similarly, there were a number of business-related files that would have been good candidates for the program, but were not required to undertake a site plan application and were therefore ineligible for support.

The technical team came to the conclusion that a concierge program would be an asset for investment attraction and business expansion but it required modification to make it effective for both the City and applicants. The decision was to develop a second phase to the program pilot to address the gaps and issues identified in the initial pilot.

This report addresses the next phase of the Concierge Pilot Program, the Development Concierge.

## **Rationale:**

### **Development Concierge Program Overview**

The intent of the Development Concierge Program is to support the growth of new and existing businesses in Kawartha Lakes. The program is a formal service that will help facilitate the development application process through a single and consistent point of contact throughout the project's lifecycle. There will be a coordinated inter-departmental approach led by the Economic Development Officer – Business, in partnership with the Development Services Department and the Engineering and Corporate Assets Department, with other departments being involved as required. A collaborative and holistic approach of each project will help facilitate this program and ensure its success over the long-term.

The Development Concierge Program will focus on larger, complex employment and industrial projects with a substantial economic impact, while increasing local employment opportunities. It is assumed that these project owners will be working directly with the City for a significant period of time from their initial inquiry to finalizing their build. The goal is to attract and support investment in Kawartha Lakes by helping new and existing businesses mitigate risk and navigate the development and construction process.

The Development Concierge Program goals are to:

- Provide businesses with a formal service that offers simplified and time-sensitive development process facilitation.
- Provide rapid and coordinated issue resolution through the convenience of a single point of contact through the Development Concierge.

The program's objectives are to:

- Provide support with the City's development review process.
- Continue to leverage and strengthen inter-departmental and inter-agency collaboration.
- Collaborate with external agencies to ensure key files are streamlined.
- Provide an elevated customer service experience.
- Identify and implement innovative solutions to issues.
- Enhance the City's public relations within the development process.
- Support and supplement implementation of related strategies, including 2020-2023 Council-adopted Strategic Plan, Economic Development Strategy.

The anticipated benefits of the program are:

- Economic growth.
- Increase in local employment opportunities.
- Assistance to businesses in navigating the development process.
- A more thorough understanding of business needs and challenges.
- Enhanced customer experience.
- More efficient and seamless approach to business attraction and development review.
- Enhanced inter-departmental collaboration.

### **Project Eligibility Criteria**

Project eligibility guidelines will be used to identify which projects fall within the Development Concierge Program. The program needs to be selective in what projects are chosen to ensure that resources required are in place. To qualify for the program, applicants must meet two or more of the following guidelines:

- Employment generator (10+ jobs).
- Minimum of 25,000 square feet of gross floor area (new construction, expansion or is a major retrofit of an existing property).
- Supports the growth of auxiliary business development in Kawartha Lakes.
- Project faces urgent timelines (has a critical timeline such that the project will not be completed without staff support i.e. reliance on grant funding).
- Complex and high profile proposal's that represent a significant monetary investment in Kawartha Lakes, with a primary focus on business or industrial development.
- Align with one of Kawartha Lakes' priority sectors (agriculture, tourism, culture, manufacturing, engineering/specialized products).

The Development Concierge Program will support both new and existing businesses in Kawartha Lakes including relocation, new construction and business expansion. The program will not support the following types of applications:

- Residential construction
- Commercial (i.e. retail) construction
- Institutional (government, religious, community facility construction)

The Development Concierge Program is subject to capacity limits, there will be a maximum of **five** files in the program any given time, unless capacity allows for the program to be expanded.

### **Development Concierge Team**

The Development Concierge Team will consist of:

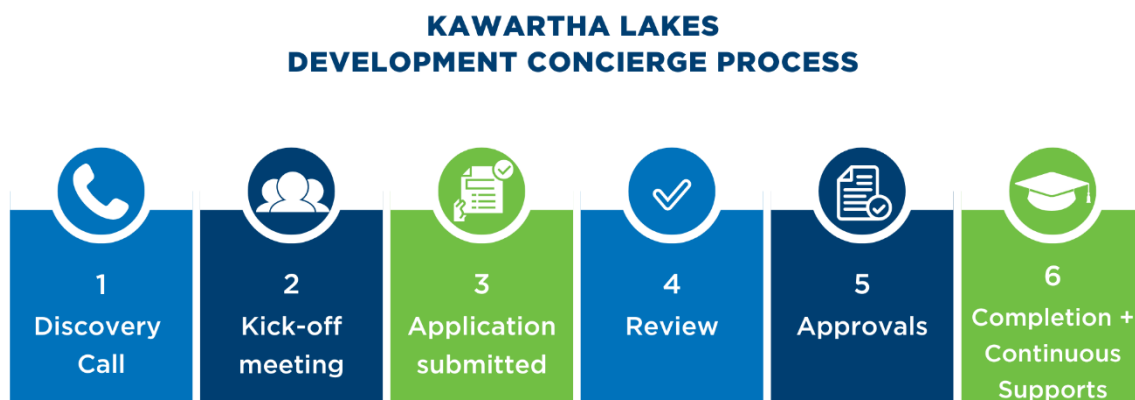
- Team Lead/Concierge – Economic Development Officer – Business
- Planning Officer – Large Developments
- Planning Officer – Large Developments and Urban Design
- Development Planning Supervisor
- Chief Building Official
- Manager, Development Engineering

Additional divisions/organizations may participate, if project directly relates to their portfolio:

- Realty Services
- Conservation Authorities – Kawartha Region Conversation Authority, Lake Simcoe Region Conversation Authority, Otonabee Conservation Authority
- Ministry of Transportation
- Public Works
- Parks and Recreation
- Revenue and Taxation

The Development Concierge Team will meet on a bi-monthly basis during the Development Review Team meetings.

### **Development Concierge Process**



### **Next Steps:**

As a soft-launch of the Development Concierge Program, the Economic Development Officer – Business will promote the Program to existing and incoming businesses into the investment pipeline to support the growth of new and existing businesses in Kawartha Lakes.

Once the Development Concierge Program has been trialed for a period of time, a comprehensive communication and marketing plan will be prepared to amplify program awareness.

The Economic Development Officer – Business will report back to the Development Review Team on a bi-monthly basis on the status of each project within the Development Concierge Program.

### **Other Alternatives Considered:**

Council could choose not to engage in the Development Concierge Program, however this is not recommended. This Program delivers the strategies and goals of the strategic plan through attracting and supporting investment to the City by assisting businesses to mitigate risk and navigate the development and construction process. Providing a heightened level of care with wraparound services would better assist businesses than it would without the program.

### **Alignment to Strategic Priorities:**

The Development Concierge Program directly implements the 2020-2023 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan Goals;

A Vibrant and Growing Economy

Good Government

A Vibrant and Growing Economy goal identifies the action to create an environment to attract businesses and expand businesses in Kawartha lakes, by offering a businesses development program that would support businesses through the development processes.

A Vibrant and Growing Economy goal identifies the direction to attract new businesses and expand local employment, which will contribute new jobs to the community, by

offering a business development program that would support businesses through the development processes.

Aligning with the strategic priority of Good Government will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery, by using a coordinated inter-departmental approach. Collaboration of City staff will help facilitate this program and ensure its success over the long-term.

### **Financial/Operation Impacts:**

At this time, the Development Concierge Program will be accomplished with existing resources. To broaden the scope beyond what is presented (e.g. additional files), additional services might be required. Should demand for the Development Concierge Program expand beyond current capacity, a report will be brought to Council for consideration.

### **Consultations:**

Director of Development Services  
Manager of Planning  
Development Planning Supervisor  
Chief Building Official  
Manager, Development Engineering  
Manager, Economic Development

### **Attachments:**

Appendix A – Development Concierge Program Framework



ED2022-041  
Appendix A.pdf

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**Department Head:** Richard Holy, Director of Development Services