

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Planning and Economic Development
September 8, 2022

Report of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner

2022 Mid-Year Development Activity Summary

1. Recommendation

1. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the local municipalities.

2. Summary

Council has delegated authority to the Chief Planner and Director of Community Planning and Development Services to issue approvals for development applications, subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually. Delegated approval authority includes routine Local Official Plan Amendments (OPAs), including exemption from Regional approval and approval of works adjacent to Regional rights-of-way and infrastructure. York Region is a commenting agency to local municipalities for draft plans of subdivision and condominium, site plans, consent to sever, zoning by-law amendment, and minor variance applications on matters of Regional interest.

Information on the mid-year 2022 development application activity for each local municipality is included in Attachment 1.

Key Points:

- In the first half of 2022, Planning and Economic Development received 262 new development applications for review, a 2% increase over 2021 (256 development applications), which was already a high-volume year for development activity
- Development charge collections increased by 23% to \$291,624,215 in the first half of 2022 from \$237,026,190 in 2021
- 17 Official Plan Amendment applications were exempted from Regional approval, 11 OPAs were not exempted, and 7 notices of decision were issued by the Director of Community Planning and Development Services on local OPAs
- Proposed residential units in new draft plan of subdivision applications increased to 872 in the first half of 2022 from 845 in 2021 and proposed residential units in new site plan applications increased to 12,017 in 2022 from 4,615 in 2021. The increase in proposed residential units in new site plan applications is a result of high-density development proposals in the cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan

- It is anticipated that development activity will continue at a similar pace for the remainder of the year
- The Region launched a public dashboard that provides the Regional current status of all development applications and staff contacts for easy access.

3. Background

Authority to approve certain development applications is delegated to Chief Planner and Director of Community Planning and Development Services

In addition to reporting on OPA approvals, the mid-year 2022 development activity report summarizes the number of new residential applications and associated proposed residential units received, together with the total number of residential units registered. The following information is presented in the Development Activity Summary Report:

- Approval of Local OPAs with no Regional requirements – Delegated
 - Subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually
- Exemption of Local OPAs from Regional approval – Delegated
 - The Region has authority to exempt an OPA from Regional approval if it is determined to be of local significance and there are no Regional requirements. The Regional Official Plan sets out criteria to determine if an amendment is eligible for exemption. If the application qualifies for exemption, the local municipality will issue the decision for the OPA.
 - Subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually
- New development applications received
- Proposed residential units received
- Number of registered plans of subdivision and registered units
- Approval of works in the Regional right-of-way as part of site plan applications with Regional requirements – Delegated
- Engineering approval of works in the Regional right-of-way – Delegated
- Planning and Development Engineering review fee and development charge collection

All nine local municipalities provide data to ensure an accurate Regional development activity report

The Region, with assistance from our local municipalities, has been collecting and tracking development related information and data received on each application in YorkTrax. Application information on location, nature of proposal, number of units, square footage for non-residential, status, progress, and associated applications is captured, and development

trends can be analyzed for reporting. As data continues to be collected in YorkTrax, the Region can more accurately track proposed development activity in each local municipality and region-wide basis to assess trends. Future connections of local systems and YorkTrax will further improve data exchange, accuracy, and timing. A full trend analysis will be provided in the final 2022 annual report in early 2023.

4. Analysis

38 local OPAs were received and 17 local OPA applications were exempted from Regional approval

The Region received 38 local OPA applications in the first half of 2022. The Director of Community Planning and Development Services issued decisions on a total of 35 local OPA applications in the first half of 2022 (17 in 2021). Not all applications received a decision within the first half of the year and some decisions issued were for amendments from applications received prior to 2022.

Of these, 17 local OPAs were exempted from Regional approval, 11 local OPAs were not exempted from Regional approval and seven notices of decision were issued on local OPAs. A majority of exempted OPAs related to changes to building height, density, built form and urban design. The high number of local OPAs not exempted from Regional approval were to ensure conformity with the Regional Official Plan and with local secondary plan updates. The Region retains the approval authority over these local OPAs. A list of local OPAs with approval status by municipality is provided in Attachment 1.

Number of development applications received in 2022 remains consistent compared to 2021

Table 1 identifies the number of new applications received by the Region by type in 2021 and 2022 with percentage change. The primary applications the Region received for review and response are OPAs, Block Plans, Draft Plan of Subdivisions, Zoning By-Law, Draft Plan of Condominiums, Engineering and Site Plans, which totaled 262 new development applications. In the first half of 2022, the number of these primary applications increased by 2% compared to 256 applications for the same period in 2021. In addition to primary applications, the Region received other development applications, including site plans (with no Regional requirements), pre-consultation, consent to sever and minor variances for review and information purposes. The Region received 836 applications in the first half of 2022, compared to 821 in 2021. It is anticipated that development activity will continue at a similar pace for the remainder of the year.

Approximately 67% of new applications received in 2022 were in the cities of Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan. A breakdown of new development applications by municipality is provided in Attachment 1.

Table 1
Number of New Applications Received by York Region
by Type in Mid-Year 2021 and 2022

Application Type (New Applications)	Mid-Year 2021	Mid-Year 2022	Per Cent (%) +/- change	
Primary Applications	Official Plan Amendments	44	38	-14%
	Block Plans	2	0	N/A
	Draft Plan of Subdivision	15	19	27%
	Zoning By-Law Amendments	76	75	-1%
	Draft Plan of Condominium	10	12	20%
	Engineering Review	26	21	-19%
	Site Plans Applications (Minor and Major) ¹	83	97	17%
Total Development Applications	256	262	2%	
Other Applications Reviewed	Site Plan (No Regional Requirements) ²	60	92	53%
	Pre-Consultation Meetings	369	319	-14%
	Consent to sever Applications	46	53	15%
	Minor Variances Applications	346	372	8%
Total Applications Received	1077	1,098	2%	

¹ Major and minor site plans are determined based on the value of construction work proposed in the Regional right-of-way. More complex right-of-way works require more detailed review.

² No Regional requirements e.g. not adjacent to a Regional road or infrastructure, source water protection area. Applications are received for information purposes only.

Number of proposed residential units in 2022 have increased by 136% compared to mid-year 2021

In the first half of 2022, the number of proposed residential units received by the Region for review as part of new draft plan of subdivision applications was 872; this is slightly higher than 845 units received by mid-year 2021, representing an 3% increase. There were 12,017 proposed residential units received for review as part of new site plan applications compared to 4,615 units received in 2021, representing a 160% increase overall (Table 2).

Development activity fluctuates from year to year and is often dependent on various factors, many outside of the Region's control, that contribute to the increase of proposed residential units. Multiple high-density residential development applications received for the cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan represent 72% of the proposed residential units as part of new site plan applications. The Region has a good supply of residential inventory undergoing the development review process.

Table 2
Proposed Residential Units Received per Mid-Year in 2021-2022

	2021	2022	Per Cent (%) +/- change
Proposed Subdivision Units ¹ (Single/Semi/Townhouse)	845	872	3%
Proposed Site Plan units ²	4,615	12,017	160%
Total proposed units	5,460	12,889	136%

¹ Proposed residential units associated with draft plan of subdivision applications (no apartments).

² Proposed residential site plan units. Units include site plan applications with no regional requirements.

Total residential units registered in 2022 decreased slightly from 2021

The number of registered plans of subdivision and condominium applications increased from 24 in 2021 to 35 in 2022 (Table 3). The residential units generated from those applications decreased from 3,142 registered units in 2021 to 2,998 in 2022, representing a 5% decrease.

The higher number of registered plans of subdivision with lower number of residential units (compared to 2021) indicates an increase in minor residential infill development through intensification. Intensification through infill development is one way a property can be developed with a higher density. Unit registration is expected to continue to remain consistent throughout the remainder of 2022.

Table 3
Registered Plans of Subdivision and Condominium Mid-Year 2021 and 2022

	2021	2022
Registered Plans of Subdivision/units	15 (1,646 units)	24 (1,526 units)
Registered Plans of Condominium/units*	9 (1,496 units)	11 (1,472 units)
Total	24 (3,142 units)	35 (2,998 units)

* Includes apartment units

The number of site plan applications receiving Regional approval increased in 2022

York Region approves Regional engineering matters in site plan applications for projects that impact Regional roadways and infrastructure. Site plan applications are reviewed for planning and legal considerations in accordance with the *Planning Act*, protection of Regional wellheads, property requirements, travel demand management, transit, intersection and access design, road and servicing design, and development implications to the Regional road system and rights-of-way. Site plan applications consist of both small ground related infill proposals and major development applications. Both minor and major site plan applications contribute towards the residential and non-residential inventory.

In the first half of 2022, 76 site plan applications received Regional approval on matters with Regional requirements compared to 63 approvals in 2021, representing a 21% increase (Table 4). The number of new minor and major site plan applications received remained consistent with last year, whereas the number of site plan applications with no Regional requirements increased by 53% (Table 1).

Table 4
Approval of Regional Requirements as Part of Site Plan Applications
Mid-Year 2021 - 2022

	2021	2022
Approved Site Plan Applications	63	76

Regional requirements e.g. adjacent to a Regional road or infrastructure, within source water protection area.

York Region reviewed 58 industrial, commercial, and institutional applications with a total of 772,350 m² (8,313,506 ft²) of gross floor area

The YorkTrax development tracking system has improved the Region's ability to collect development related data on applications received from the local municipalities. All development applications are uploaded into YorkTrax for data capture, analysis, and reporting purposes.

In addition to residential units, YorkTrax now collects non-residential data that includes commercial, industrial, and institutional gross floor area (GFA). In mid-year 2022, the Region received 58 applications with 772,350 m² (8,313,506 ft²) commercial, industrial and institutional GFA for review as part of new site plan applications. The non-residential GFA, shown in Table 5, is collected through new site plan applications only as it is more accurate compared to other applications. Non-residential GFA proposed in OPA applications are not captured due to their preliminary nature. Future development activity reports will provide trends and analysis on non-residential development applications as more data is collected.

Table 5
Proposed Non-Residential GFA Received Mid-Year 2022

	2022
Commercial	307,956 m ² (3,314,811 ft ²)
Industrial	264,546 m ² (2,847,549 ft ²)
Institutional	42,374 m ² (456,110 ft ²)

Proposed non-residential GFA from site plan applications only.

Engineering approvals remained the same in 2022 with 16 approvals

Regional staff issue engineering approvals for works proposed as part of subdivision applications or local municipal capital projects, which involve Regional infrastructure or located in the Region's right-of-way. From January 1 to June 30, 2022, approvals for 16 subdivision-related engineering plans were issued, similar to the first half of 2021. These applications involve both above-ground and below ground engineering works, including but not limited to, intersection and access improvements, road widening, electrical and signalization, storm, water, and sanitary servicing connections, property grading and construction access.

The number of engineering approvals is tied to approvals required for applications to proceed to clearance for registration. Given the consistent number of engineering approvals in 2022, the Region will continue to experience strong growth as these applications proceed to registration and construction.

Regional staff participate on advisory committees and working groups to plan new development areas with local municipal partners

Planning and Economic Development staff participate in Regional and local Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and Project Working Groups. This includes urban expansion areas, new Secondary Plans and Key Development Areas. Input to these committees and working groups is important to ensure Regional requirements are identified early in the planning process. Region staff also review pre-consultation requests to provide comments and submission requirements for future development applications.

YorkTrax now provides access to local municipalities, developers and the public for application status across the Region

To further improve development process transparency and streamlining, the Region launched a public dashboard accessible from the Region's [website](#). The dashboard provides the Regional current status of all development applications and staff contacts for easy access. It features an interactive map that can filter applications based on date received, municipality and application type. It can be referenced between the comprehensive semi-annual reports to Council.

5. Financial

Application fee revenues decreased by 7% compared to previous mid-year collection

Development application fees are collected in accordance with Regional Bylaw No. 2020-04, as amended, for land use planning approvals and the plan review function. As shown in Table 6, Regional development fees collected in the first half of 2022 decreased by 7% compared to 2021. The decrease in revenue is attributed to a lower number of resubmissions in 2022.

Table 6
Fee Revenue for Development Planning and Engineering
Mid-Year 2021 to Mid-Year 2022

	2021	2022
Total	\$2,607,100	\$2,431,621

Development charge collection of \$291,624,215 represents a 23% increase from mid-year 2021

Development charges are collected through development approval process to help recover costs for growth-related infrastructure. Currently, development charges are collected at

subdivision registration and building permit issuance (Attachment 2). From January 1 to June 30, 2022, \$291,624,215 in development charges was collected. This is an increase of 23% over mid-year 2021 (\$237,026,190). Figure 1 shows DC collection in the last 10 years.

On May 26, 2022, Council approved DC Bylaw No. 2022-31. The new Regional development charge rates came into effect on June 17, 2022 with a increase in soft services rates and a slight decrease in hard services rates.

Regional development charge increases have historically resulted in spikes of draft plan of subdivision registrations; however, the impact may be less pronounced this year due to:

- Decrease in the hard services rates under the 2022 DC Bylaw, which may have caused development to delay subdivision registration until after June 17
- The rate freezing provisions in effect

Regional DC Collections forecast projected higher collections in 2022 compared to the average annual amounts collected in the previous three years. It is anticipated that DC collections would continue to be realized in the second half of 2022 as developers proceed with projects.

Figure 1
Development Charges Collection Trend – 10 years

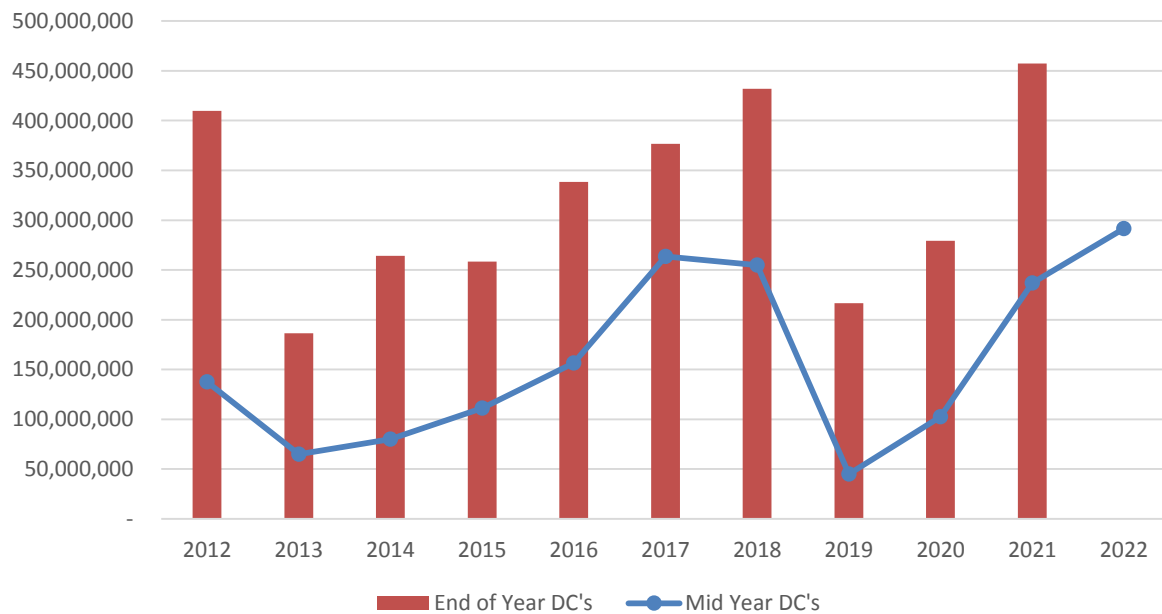


Table 7
Development Charges Collected by Mid-Year 2021 to 2022

2021	2022
\$237,026,190	\$291,624,215

6. Local Impact

Regional staff work closely with local municipal staff to ensure timely review of development applications, Regional and local policy objectives are met, approvals occur within the timelines prescribed by the *Planning Act*. Continued collaboration, and development data exchange assists in timely processing of applications.

7. Conclusion

The 2022 Mid-Year Development Activity report summarizes delegated approvals and new development applications received by the Region in 2022 with a 2021 comparison, using data collected from YorkTrax, to Council for information. A full trend analysis will be provided in the final 2022 annual report in early 2023.

The Director of Community Planning and Development Services issued decisions on a total of 35 local OPA applications in the first half of 2022. While the number of applications fluctuate annually due to the cyclical nature of development, applications received in the first half of 2022 remained consistent to last year. Total proposed residential units related to new draft plan of subdivision and site plan applications significantly increased to 12,889 in 2022 from 5,460 in 2021. The increase in proposed residential units in new site plan applications is a result of high-density site plan applications received in cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan. The Region has a good supply of residential inventory undergoing the development review process.

The increase in development charge collection is an indicator of a higher level of construction as charges are payable either at registration of plans of subdivision or at building permit. Development charge collection increased by 23% to \$291,624,215 in 2022 (2021 - \$237,026,190). It is anticipated that development activity will remain strong in 2022.

Regional staff will continue to work closely with local municipal partners to achieve Regional and local policy objectives through the development review and approval process. Continued process improvement through YorkTrax helps Regional staff ensure timely approvals within the timelines prescribed by the *Planning Act*.

For more information on this report, please contact Asif Abbas, Planner, at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77271. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



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Attachments (2)
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