



Report of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner 2023 Mid-Year Development Activity Summary

1. Recommendation

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

2. Purpose

Council has delegated authority to the Chief Planner and Director of 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.

Development activity and approvals will continue to be report to Council during the transition period for Bill 23 until approval authority has been transferred to local municipalities.

Key Points:

- As of August 2023, the Region has an approved housing supply of an estimated 63,000 units [Housing Supply Update – August 2023](#). The Region has a strong supply of residential inventory, well within Provincial requirements that a 3-to-7-year supply of draft approved and registered plans be maintained
- Development activity continues to remain strong, however associated Development Charges for infrastructure supporting growth has declined with the 20% discount imposed through Bill 23 being implemented

- 18 Official Plan Amendment (OPA) applications were exempted from Regional approval, 1 OPA was not exempted, and 5 notices of decision were issued by the Director of Development Services on local OPAs
- In the first half of 2023, York Region received 222 new development applications for review, a 15% decrease over 2022 (262 development applications)
- Accrued development charge collections decreased by 48% to \$152,386,317 in the first half of 2023 from \$291,624,215 in 2022, which was anticipated as a result of changes from Bill 23 as well as a slowdown in housing activity, due to current economic conditions
- Proposed residential units in new draft plan of subdivision applications increased to 1,171 in the first half of 2023 from 872 in 2022 and proposed residential units in new site plan applications decreased to 7,955 in 2023 from 12,017 in 2022
- Fee Revenue for Development Planning and Engineering increased by 53% to \$3,729,331 in 2023 from \$2,431,621 in 2022
- It is anticipated that development activity will continue at a similar pace for the remainder of the year

3. Background

Authority to approve certain development applications is delegated to the Chief Planner and Director of Development Services, subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually

In addition to reporting on OPA approvals, the mid-year 2023 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 on delegated approvals is presented in the Development Activity Summary Report:

- Approval of Local OPAs with no Regional requirements
- Exemption of Local OPAs from Regional approval
 - 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 issues the decision for the OPA.
- Approval of works in the Regional right-of-way as part of site plan applications with Regional requirements
- Engineering approval of works in the Regional right-of-way

In addition to delegated authority, the following information is presented in the Development Activity Summary Report:

- New development applications received
- Proposed residential units received
- Number of registered plans of subdivision, draft approved and registered units
- Planning and Development Engineering review fee and Development charge collection

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

Since 2017, York Region, with assistance from the 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, non-residential floor area, status, progress, and associated applications are captured, and development trends can be analyzed for reporting. As data continues to be collected in YorkTrax, the Region can more accurately track development activity in each municipality and on a region-wide basis to assess trends. Development data provided by the local municipalities plays a vital role in managing growth to support justifying future infrastructure needs. Future connections of local systems with YorkTrax through data exchange will improve accuracy and timing. Data and trends will continue to be reported to Council on a regular basis and provide useful live dashboards and products to assist both the Local and Regional understanding of development trends.

4. Analysis

40 local OPAs were received and 18 local OPA applications were exempted from Regional approval

The Region received 40 local OPA applications in the first half of 2023, compared to 38 in 2022. The Director of Development Services issued decisions on a total of 24 local OPA applications in the first half of 2023 (35 in 2022). 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 2023.

Of the 24 decisions issued, 18 local OPAs were exempted from Regional approval, one local OPA was not exempted from Regional approval and five 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 OPAs exempted from Regional approval were determined to be of local significance, with no Regional requirements, and they conformed with Provincial plans and Regional Official Plan policies. The consistent number of OPA applications received in the first half of 2023 and 2022 indicates that development continues to remain strong within the Region. A list of local OPAs with approval status by municipality is provided in Attachment 1.

Table 1
Number of New Applications Received by Type in Mid-Year 2022 and 2023

	Application Type (New Applications)	Mid- Year 2022	Mid- Year 2023	Per Cent (%) +/- change
Primary Applications	Official Plan Amendments	38	40	5%
	Block Plans	0	0	N/A
	Draft Plan of Subdivision	19	13	-31%
	Zoning By-Law Amendments	75	59	-21%
	Draft Plan of Condominium	12	16	33%
	Engineering Review	21	21	0%
	Site Plans Applications (Minor and Major) ¹	97	73	-25%
	Total Development Applications	262	222	-15%
Other Applications Reviewed	Site Plan (No Regional Requirements) ²	92	56	-38%
	Pre-Consultation Meetings	319	239	-25%
	Consent to sever Applications	53	68	28%
	Minor Variances Applications	372	322	-13%
	Total Applications Received	1,098	907	-17%

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.

Total number of development applications received in 2023 decreased by 17% compared to 2022

Table 1 identifies the number of new applications received by the Region by type in 2022 and 2023 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 222 new development applications. In the first half of 2023, the number of these primary applications decreased by 15% compared to 262 applications for the same period in 2022. 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 685 applications in the first half of 2023, compared to 836 in 2022. It is anticipated that development activity will continue at a similar pace for the remainder of the year.

Approximately 64% of new applications received in 2023 were in the cities of Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan. A breakdown of new development applications by municipality is provided in Attachment 1.

Number of proposed residential units received decreased by 29%

In the first half of 2023, the total number of proposed residential units received by the Region for review decreased by 29%. Units as part of new draft plan of subdivision applications was 1,171; this is higher than 872 units received by mid-year 2022, representing a 34% increase. There were 7,955 proposed residential units received for review as part of new site plan applications compared to 12,017 units received in 2022, representing a 34% decrease (Table 2).

Development activity fluctuates from year to year and is often dependent on various factors, many outside of the Region's control. In 2022, multiple high-density residential development applications were received for the cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan resulting in an increase of proposed residential units as part of site plan applications. As of August 2023, the Region has an approved housing supply of an estimated 63,000 units ([Housing Supply Update – August 2023](#) memo reviewed at the Housing Affordability Task Force on September 7, 2023). Based on the Region's approved Regional Official Plan forecast, this represents a supply of more than five years of growth - well within the Provincial requirements that a 3-to-7-year supply of draft approved and registered plans be maintained.

Table 2
Proposed Residential Units Received per Mid-Year in 2022 and 2023

	2022	2023	Per Cent (%) +/- change
Proposed Subdivision Units ¹ (Single/Semi/Townhouse)	872	1,171	34%
Proposed Site Plan units ²	12,017	7,955	-34%
Total proposed units	12,889	9,126	-29%

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 2023 decreased by 19% compared with 2022

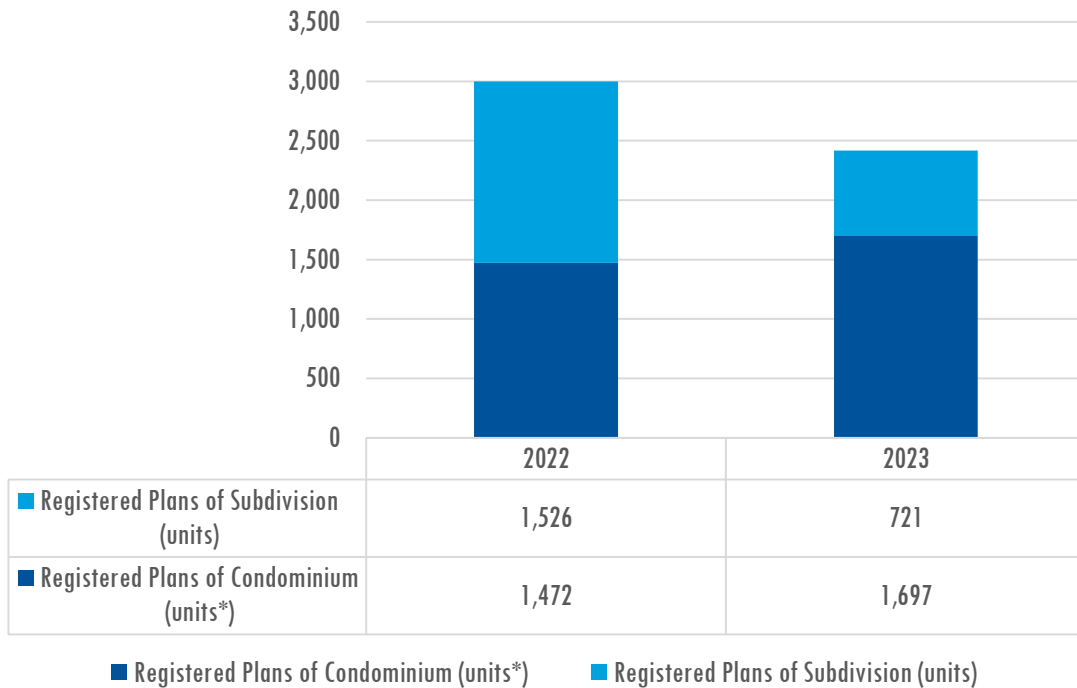
Twenty-four registered plans of subdivision and condominium applications were submitted in 2023 compared to 35 in 2022 (Table 3). The associated registered residential units generated from those applications decreased from 2,998 registered units in 2022 to 2,418 in 2023, representing a 19% decrease (Figure 1).

Unit registrations tend to decrease in the year after DC Bylaw update or an amendment when rates increase. 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 an increase in soft services rates and a slight decrease in hard services rates. It is expected that residential unit registrations will slow down in 2023. While the number of unit registrations has decreased, overall, there is a healthy supply of residential units under review and approved.

Table 3
Registered Plans of Subdivision and Condominium Applications Mid-Year 2022 and 2023

	2022	2023
Registered Plans of Subdivision	24	16
Registered Plans of Condominium	11	8
Total	35	24

Figure 1
Registered Plans of Subdivision and Condominium Units Mid-Year 2022 and 2023



* Includes apartment units

Site plan applications requiring and receiving Regional approval decreased in 2023

York Region approves engineering matters that impact Regional roadways and infrastructure as part of site plan applications. 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 applications ranging from small ground related infill to major development proposals. Both minor and major site plan applications contribute towards residential and non-residential inventory.

York Region provides conditions of site plan approval and enters into tri-party agreements to ensure Regional requirements and interests are protected. Final approval of site plan applications and their conditions of approval are the responsibility of the local municipality. Appendix A shows the development review process along with planning act timelines versus applicant driven timeline.

In the first half of 2023, 63 site plan applications received Regional approval on matters with Regional requirements compared to 76 approvals in 2022, representing a 17% decrease (Table 4). The decrease may be caused, in part, by a lower number of applications being received at

the local municipality due to Bill 23. The *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) makes a number of changes to the Site Plan Control provisions of the *Planning Act*. All residential developments with 10 or fewer dwelling units are exempt from Site Plan Control unless the development is in a prescribed area. Not all site plan approvals are for applications received within the first half of the year, some approvals were for applications received prior to 2023.

Table 4
Approval of Regional Requirements as Part of Site Plan Applications
Mid-Year 2022 and 2023

	2022	2023
Approved Site Plan Applications	76	63

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

Required engineering approvals decreased by 31% since 2022 with 11 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, 2023, approvals for 11 subdivision-related engineering plans or local municipal capital projects were issued, whereas 16 approvals were issued in the first half of 2022. 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.

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

Development Services 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.

5. Financial Considerations

Application fee revenues increased by 53% 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 5, Regional development fees collected in the first half of 2023 increased by 53% compared to 2022. The increased fee revenue in 2023 is a result of submission fees for new applications received and complex applications requiring additional engineering works and fees associated with intensification projects. Complex development applications involve review of numerous reports/studies and multiple re-submissions. The fees are based on a percentage of the estimated cost of works within the Regional right-of-way. Less complex applications are subject to a minimum review fee.

Table 5
Fee Revenue for Development Planning and Engineering Mid-Year 2022 and Mid-Year 2023

	2022	2023
Total	\$2,431,621	\$3,729,331

2023 accrued development charge collections of \$152,386,317 represents a 48% decrease from mid-year 2022

Development charges (DCs) are collected through development approval process to help recover costs for growth-related infrastructure. Currently, DCs are collected at subdivision registration and building permit issuance (Appendix A). From January 1 to June 30, 2023, \$152,386,317 in DCs were collected (Table 6), a 48% decrease compared to mid-year 2022 (\$291,624,215), on an accrual basis. The lower DC collections was anticipated as part of the 2023 budget due to changes introduced by Bill 23 as well as the slowdown in housing activity due to current economic conditions. DC collections are currently on track to meet forecasts.

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 an increase in soft services rates and a slight decrease in hard services rates. On November 28, 2022, Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2019* (Bill 23), which made changes to the *Development Charges Act, 1997*, received Royal Assent. Amongst the changes introduced by Bill 23 was the immediate removal of Housing Services as a development charges eligible service and the introduction of new phasing provisions. The new phasing provisions, which applied to DC Bylaw 2022-31, provide that when a new DC bylaw is passed, the full DC rates must be phased-in, beginning at 80% of

the new rate in the first year of the bylaw. Taken together, these changes resulted in the Region’s residential DC rates being reduced by 22%.

Table 6
Development Charges Collected by Mid-Year 2022 and 2023

2022	2023
\$291,624,215	152,386,317

6. Local Impact

Regional staff work closely with local municipal staff to ensure the timely review of development applications, meeting Regional and local policy objectives, and approvals occur within the timelines prescribed by the Planning Act. Last year, the Region received Provincial funding through the Streamline Development Approval fund to implement changes that would streamline the development approval process.

The Region and its nine local municipal partners and Conservation Authorities are working together to develop planning data standards that include a common application form, common terms of reference and a consistent process to streamline application submission requirements. This work will improve the customer experience and provide a more efficient process to support the Province’s target to build 1.5 million homes in Ontario over the next 10 years.

7. Conclusion

The 2023 Mid-Year Development Activity report summarizes delegated approvals and new development applications received by the Region in 2023 with a 2022 comparison, using data collected from YorkTrax, to Council for information. A full trend analysis will be provided in the final 2023 annual report in early 2024.

The Director of Development Services issued decisions on a total of 24 local OPA applications in the first half of 2023. The number of applications fluctuate annually due to the cyclical nature of development, applications received in the first half of 2023 decreased by 15% from 2022. Proposed residential units received for review as part of new draft plan of subdivision applications increased by 34%. Total proposed residential units related to new draft plan of subdivision and site plan decreased by 29%. In 2022, multiple high-density residential development applications were received for the cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan resulting in an increase of proposed residential units as part of site plan applications. The Region has a strong supply of residential inventory, well within Provincial requirements that a 3-to-7-year supply of draft approved and registered plans be maintained.

Accrued development charge collections decreased by 48% to \$152,386,317 in the first half of 2023 from \$291,624,215 in 2022, which was anticipated as a result of changes from Bill 23 as well as a slowdown in housing activity, due to current economic conditions. The lower DC collections was anticipated as part of the 2023 budget due to changes introduced by Bill 23 as well as the slowdown in housing activity due to current economic conditions. DC collections are currently on track to meet forecasts.

Regional staff will continue to work closely with local municipal partners to achieve Regional and local policy objectives, implement provisions of Bill 23 and opportunities to streamline the approval process and ensures approvals are met within the timelines prescribed by the *Planning Act*.

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

Recommended by:



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Approved for Submission:



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#15550920

Appendix A – Development Process and DC Collection
Attachment 1 – 2023 Mid-Year Development Activity Summary by Local Municipality

Development Process and DC Collection

