





CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Building Division and General Manager's Office

TO:	Chair and Members Planning Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	July 5, 2022
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Planning and Economic Development Department (PED) Power Platform Portal (PED22163) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Robert Lalli (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4674
SUBMITTED BY: SIGNATURE:	Robert Lalli Director, Strategic Initiatives Planning and Economic Development Department 
SUBMITTED BY: SIGNATURE:	Alan Shaw Chief Building Official, Director of Building Division Planning and Economic Development Department 

RECOMMENDATION

That the Chief Building Official be authorized to use up to \$700,000 from the Building Permit Fee Reserve (104050) to support the development of online services for the Building Division on a Microsoft Power Platform portal for the Planning and Economic Development Department (PED).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Building Division of the Planning and Economic Development Department (PED) intakes applications for building permits through an online portal (ePlans), implemented in 2017 through a single source procurement. This online portal was developed solely for the Building Division to enable the Building Division to receive digital application submissions and allow customer monitoring of the progress of a building permit application. As part of PED's strategic technology roadmap, the department is

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Planning and Economic Development Department (PED) Power Platform Portal (PED22163) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 6

expanding its digital applications program to include digital and paperless processing of development applications across all development application types, including those in other PED Divisions (e.g. the Planning Division).

Due to advancements in the technology landscape, a third-party consultant was commissioned by PED to review the existing portal environment, limitations, opportunities and to create a future focused roadmap. The findings of the portal evaluation confirmed that the existing ePlans portal was not the preferred solution to address the needs of the other Divisions within PED. The independent review recommended the City move forward with an enterprise level portal solution utilizing the Microsoft Power Platform suite of products. The Microsoft Power Platform suite of products have the capability to improve citizen interaction, providing a centralized and congruent online experience for citizens, by allowing the citizen to log in to see all their in-progress and completed service requests in one place.

Phase One of the Power Platform Portal for PED development applications will include development of a citizen login page to access PED services. Creation of an online service for scheduling of Pre-Consultation appointments with the Planning Division, and online service for application and payment of Site Plan Applications. Additionally, migration of all Building Division services currently available online via ePlans. Future phases will include services for additional Development applications and Film permits and will be subject to future capital funding approvals. The estimated cost for Phase One of developing a Power Platform Portal for PED development applications is \$1,015,000. Funding in the amount of \$100,000 is already available in the Council-approved Digital Planning Applications Capital Project (8121957901). A further \$300,000 has been secured from the Provincial government through the Streamlining Development Approvals Fund. This Report is seeking Council's approval to utilize the Building Permit Fee Reserve for the remainder of the costs.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 6

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The estimated cost for Phase One of developing a Power Platform Portal for PED development applications are \$1,015,000, to be funded as follows:

Account	Account Number	Amount
Streamlining Development Approvals Fund (provincial funding)	N/A	\$300,000
Digital Planning Applications Capital Project	8121957901	\$100,000

SUBJECT: Planning and Economic Development Department (PED) Power Platform Portal (PED22163) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 6

Building Permit Fee Reserve	104050	\$615,000
Total		\$1,015,000

In addition to the capital costs associated with developing the portal, staff estimate an operating impact for software licensing costs of \$150,000.00 per year, commencing in 2024.

Staffing: Overall coordination of the PED Power Platform Portal project will be led by the Director of Strategic Initiatives in the General Managers Office and supported by existing staffing resources in the affected divisions. The project will require two temporary contract resources to provide technical support and maintenance during the implementation of this project, which are accounted for in the overall budget.

Upon project completion, staff will assess the need for any permanent staffing to support the operation of the portal, and staff would anticipate bringing forward any additional staffing needs as part of the 2024 Operating Budget.

Legal: Legal Services staff may be requested to assist in creating a contract with the successful proponent for the implementation of the Power Platform Portal in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At its meeting of July 8, 2016, Council received Information Report PED16156 outlining the details of the proposed AMANDA Improvement Initiatives project, which included the development of the ePlans Portal for the Building Division.

At its meeting of August 9, 2016, Council approved Report PED16156(a) for proposed AMANDA Improvement Initiatives project, which included the recommendation for the work outlined in Information Report PED161156 to be completed via single source procurement, pursuant to Procurement Policy 11.

Periodic updates on PED's digital applications platform and submission portable have been provided to Council through the Open For Business Subcommittee and through PED's annual budget presentation.

At its meeting of April 7, 2022, Council approved the Recommendation Report FCS22036 for the standardization of Microsoft Power Platform as a city standard for the development of online services.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

By-Law 21-215 Procurement Policy, Policy 4.14, Standardization

The procurement of services to complete Phase 1 will be conducted in accordance with the City Procurement Policy.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

- Corporate Services Department – Information Technology Division;
- Corporate Services Department – Financial Planning Administration and Policy Division; and,
- Planning and Economic Development – General Managers Office.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Building Division in the Planning and Economic Development Department (PED) intakes applications for building permits through an online portal (ePlans), implemented in 2017 through a single source procurement. This online portal was developed solely for the Building Division to enable the Building Division to receive digital application submissions and allow customer monitoring of the progress of a building permit application. As part of PED’s strategic technology roadmap, a need was identified to move to digital and paperless processing of development applications and expand to digital processing of additional application types, such as Site Plan, Engineering applications and Film Permits. Due to advancements in the technology landscape, a third-party consultant was commissioned to review the existing portal environment, limitations, opportunities and to create a future focused roadmap.

IT Architecture Management Institute (AMI) was engaged through the City’s Consulting and Professional Services Roster to complete the PED Portal Assessment Report, an assessment of the City’s current online development application solution against the requirements for expansion identified by PED. The assessment included capabilities of the current tools, the vendors that provide and support those tools, as well as a market scan of alternative products, and solutions in place in neighbouring municipalities. The following was used as guiding principles in the evaluation:

Category	Description
Citizen Centric	The Portal needs to be Citizen Centric to increase the user adoption by Citizens. Citizens should have a single point of Portal access to interact with many of the City’s online services and processes.

SUBJECT: Planning and Economic Development Department (PED) Power Platform Portal (PED22163) (City Wide) - Page 5 of 6

Simple and Intuitive	The Portal needs to be simple and intuitive to use by Citizens and City staff who will administer and execute on the business processes.
Flexible and Expandable	The Portal needs to be flexible and expandable to incorporate changes and enhancements very easily.
Manageable & Supportable	The Portal needs to be easily manageable and supportable by City IT staff that includes infrastructure, development technologies, configuration, and setup.
City IT capabilities and standards	The Portal needs to align with city technology standards and capabilities to leverage existing tools, skillsets, staff knowledge, contracts, and development resource capabilities.
Cost Effective	The Portal needs to be cost effective by leveraging existing assets, simplified design, access to readily available third-party resources and development staff.
Process Improvement	The Portal needs to simplify and improve business processes which may require a different user experience view rather than existing older process's view.
Enterprise Level Focused	The Portal needs to be designed, built, and supported as an Enterprise Level solution for many departments and divisions to use. This will provide Citizens with a single profile and access to many City services across different departments and divisions.

The findings of the PED Portal Assessment Report confirmed that the existing ePlans portal could not be expanded to address the needs of the other divisions within PED. The PED Portal Assessment Report recommended that the City move forward with an Enterprise level portal solution such as the Microsoft Power Platform suite of products, which was assessed to meet the requirements for expansion outlined by PED.

Subsequently, AMI was engaged again to complete the PED Portal Migration Plan, which provided an estimate of the financial and resource implications of moving to a Power Platform solution, as well as provided a recommended roll out strategy.

The recommendation from the PED Portal Migration Plan was to secure a Microsoft Power Platform Implementation partner through a competitive procurement process and break the delivery into multiple phases, starting with a low complexity end to end application that could then be leveraged by future phases. Funding provided by the Province in 2022 through the Streamlining Development Approvals Fund, which was created to help Ontario municipalities unlock housing supply by streamlining, digitizing, and modernizing their approach to managing and approving applications for residential developments, has been allocated to support a portion of the delivery of the new PED Portal. However, it necessitated that the funds be used, and a solution in place, by

SUBJECT: Planning and Economic Development Department (PED) Power Platform Portal (PED22163) (City Wide) - Page 6 of 6

January 31, 2023. This shift resulted in a change in approach for delivery of the portal into a multi-phase delivery. Phase 1 (in scope for this Report) will include:

- Pre-Consultation appointment booking
- Site Plan applications
- Building Permit applications

Phase 2 (not in scope for this Report) will expand the Portal into remaining divisions within PED in 2024 and beyond.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Submit as a Capital project request in the 2023 Capital Budget. This is not recommended, as the delayed timeline would result in the loss of funds from the Provincial Streamline Development Approval Fund.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

Our People and Performance

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A