



## City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

**To:** Chair and Members  
Planning Committee

**Date:** June 10, 2025

**Report No:** PED25170

**Subject/Title:** Approval of Funding for Request for Proposals:  
Review of Subdivision Process and Comprehensive  
Development Guidelines

**Ward(s) Affected:** City Wide

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### Recommendations

- 1) That the allocation of \$450,000 from the Development Fees Stabilization reserve (110086) to a new project ID which will be established to fund the forthcoming study being undertaken by the Growth Management Division on the Review of the Subdivision Process / Agreement and Comprehensive Development Guidelines, through a competitive Request for Proposals process, **BE APPROVED**.

### Key Facts

- The Growth Management Division is completing a Review of the Subdivision Process / Agreement and the Comprehensive Development Guidelines to ensure the Division's processes and guidelines are reflective of industry best practices.
- A key objective of this review is to reduce approval times for the development community and enhance the customer experience in navigating the development approvals process. The Engineering Working Group (a subset of the Development Industry Liaison Group) will be an active participant and key stakeholder throughout this review.
- A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued to retain a consultant team to conduct the Review which will consist of two phases of work (Phase 1 will include a comprehensive industry scan and consultation and Phase 2 will include the development of new and updated Comprehensive Development Guidelines).

- It is anticipated that the completion of this Review may be valued at up to \$450,000 given the scope of the study, including the two phases of completion. To ensure timely completion of the RFP process and the overall project, staff are requesting authorization for funding up to \$450,000 through this recommendation.

## **Financial Considerations**

Funding is to be allocated from the Development Fees Stabilization Reserve (account 110086) into a new project to accurately and efficiently manage the funds.

As per the recommendation, staff are requesting approval for up to \$450,000 from the reserve to be utilized for the completion of the Subdivision Process / Agreement and Comprehensive Design Guidelines Review. However, as discussed further in the Analysis section below, the request for funding to a maximum of \$450,000 is a conservative estimate to allow for additional works to be completed as part of Phase 2 of the Review without causing a project delay or project work stoppage to seek approval of additional funding later in the process. The total value of the project may therefore be less than the \$450,000 being allocated through this approval and the entirety of the approved funding may therefore not be utilized.

The available balance in the Development Fees Stabilization Reserve is approximately \$20 million.

## **Analysis**

1. The Growth Management Division is commencing a review of two key components of the development approvals process: (1) Plan of Subdivision Process and Subdivision Agreements; and (2) Comprehensive Development Guidelines and Financial Policies Manual.

In addition to ensuring that the Division's processes, agreements and guidelines are up to date and reflective of best practices, a key objective in undertaking this review is to reduce approval times for the development community and enhance the customer experience in navigating the development approvals process. It is anticipated that updates to the Subdivision Process / Agreement and the Comprehensive Development Guidelines which are identified through this review will play a key role in assisting the City with meeting its objectives to streamline development approvals and spur new and expedited growth and development. In this regard, staff have consulted with the Engineering Working Group (a subset of the Development Industry Liaison Group) about the review and this group will be an active participant and key stakeholder throughout the process.

The two components are briefly described as follows:

a) Plan of Subdivision Process / Agreement Review:

The review of the Plan of Subdivision process will focus on the components of the process led by the Growth Management Division (issuance of conditions of Draft Plan approval, issuance of draft approval, registration of a Subdivision Agreement, engineering review and approval, servicing release, Plan registration, and ultimately the inspection and assumption of municipal infrastructure by the City). A key element in the subdivision process is the Subdivision Agreement. Subdivision Agreements are of fundamental importance to Ontario's land use planning process and are an enforceable mechanism for ensuring that municipal services and infrastructure are designed and constructed in accordance with approved engineering drawings and in conformity with City standards, policies and guidelines.

The study will include a review of the City's existing subdivision process and Agreement, an industry scan of best practices among comparator jurisdictions, identification of gaps and opportunities for improvements, and recommendations to help achieve enhanced efficiency, accountability and overall level of service.

b) Comprehensive Development Guidelines and Financial Policies (CDGFP) Manual Review:

The CDGFP is a manual for developers, land owners, municipal staff and consultants. It identifies requirements related to servicing, lot grading, road design, street lighting, financial policies and other matters, and outlines the process for engineering plan review, plans / drawings and studies to be required, construction and inspection requirements, and securities requirements. The CDGFP identifies detailed design guidelines and specifications for watermains, storm and sanitary sewers, stormwater management, roads and sidewalks, and grading design criteria. Further, the financial policies include cost sharing for infrastructure over-sizing, cost sharing for street frontage and cost recovery policies.

The review of the CDGFP Manual will proceed in two phases. Phase 1 will include a broader review of the processes, methodologies and requirements outlined in the Manual and make recommendations for updates to address gaps, reflect best practices, improve process and procedures and other improvement opportunities. Phase 2 will focus on developing and updating the specific guidelines, terms of reference, and agreement templates amongst other matters identified in Phase 1.

Staff will report to Council with the findings of the review and with appropriate recommendations upon the completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2.

2. The consultant team for this project will be retained through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process in accordance with the City's Procurement Policy. Staff anticipate working with Procurement to issue the RFP in Q3 2025 and anticipate awarding the RFP in Q4 2025. It is anticipated that the first phase of the review will be undertaken

in approximately 8 months, with completion targeted by end of Q2 2026. Phase 2 will proceed following the conclusion of Phase 1 with completion targeted by the end of 2026.

In order to ensure timely award of the Contract to the successful consultant, staff is seeking Council approval for the funding to complete the Review prior to issuance of an RFP. It is noted that this project was identified as a Division priority late in 2024 following the completion of the budget process and was therefore not included in the 2025 budget. Due to the project not being identified through the budget process, this separate request for Council authorization of the funding is required.

The ultimate value of this project is not known at present. However, given the scope of the project which includes two components as described above, the extensive consultation to be undertaken, and the two phases of work, staff anticipate that it is likely the value will be greater than \$250,000. Part of the difficulty in estimating the value of the project is the unknowns associated with Phase 2. The level of required effort by the consultant team to complete the updates as part of Phase 2 will not be known until Phase 1 is completed (i.e. the specifications, agreement templates and processes requiring revision in Phase 2 will be identified through the first phase). Therefore, to be conservative, staff have requested funding to a maximum of \$450,000 to allow for additional works to be completed as part of Phase 2 without requiring a project delay or project work stoppage to seek approval of additional funding later in the process. The value of the project may therefore be less than the \$450,000 being allocated through this approval. Any amounts not utilized for this project will be maintained in the reserve fund upon completion of the works.

## **Alternatives**

Council may consider the following alternatives:

1. Do not approve the request to approve up to \$450,000 in funding for the review of the Subdivision Process / Agreement and the CDGFP manual.

In this scenario, staff could proceed with different options:

- a) Staff could continue to issue the RFP for the full contract (i.e. both components of the work and both phases) but the maximum value of the project would be less than \$250,000 (and therefore would not require Council approval). The risk with this scenario is that the quotes received in response to the RFP may exceed the value of \$250,000. This would result in a situation where the contract could not be awarded, or alternatively, staff could seek additional approval from Council for any shortfall in funding after the close of the RFP. However, both scenarios would cause a delay in the overall process or start of the Contract.

- b) Staff could issue the RFP with a reduced scope (eg. split the assignment into separate projects or complete only Phase 1 in the initial project). While this may have the outcome of reducing the value of each component of the project below \$250,000, staff do not recommend this option as the overall cost would likely be higher than the cost of undertaking all the work under the same assignment. Further, this alternative will not efficiently use staff or consultant resources, would require multiple RFP processes and would delay the completion of the overall project.
  - c) Staff could determine not to proceed with the project. This is not recommended given the importance of completing this review to assist the City in meeting its objectives to reduce approval times for the development community and enhance the customer experience in navigating the development approvals process.
2. Approve funding in an amount less than \$450,000 (but greater than \$250,000). This option would allow staff to continue with RFP issuance. The risk, similar to 1(a) above, is that the quotes received in response to the RFP issuance may exceed the allocated amount, resulting in delays.

## **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

See [2022-2026 Council Priorities, Outcomes & Measures of Success | City of Hamilton](#) for more information on Council's Priorities.

- 1. Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development
  - 1.1. Facilitate the growth of key sectors
- 2. Responsiveness & Transparency
  - 2.1. Prioritize customer service and proactive communication
  - 2.2. Build a high performing public service
  - 2.3. Modernize City systems

## **Consultation**

Internal:

Procurement Division, Finance and Corporate Services Department

Financial Planning, Administration and Policy, Corporate Services Department

External:

Engineering Working Group (subset of the Development Industry Liaison Group)

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