



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To: Council

From: Jill Hogan, Commissioner, Development Services

Date: November 13, 2023

Report No: DS-052-23

Subject: Streamlining Development Services Process Update

Recommendation: **THAT Report DS-052-23 be received for information.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report provides an update of the Phase One implementation and anticipated impact of the Town of Milton's Public Online Services Portal. The portal was developed and launched as part of the Province's Streamline Development Approval Fund (SDAF), as well as the Town's ongoing efforts to modernize and streamline the development process, building permit application process, improve accessibility and transparency, and enhance customer service for residents, businesses, and stakeholders.

Following the announcement at the Province's Housing Summit and being identified as one of the 39 large municipalities which would qualify for the Streamlining Development Process Funding (SDAF) the Town of Milton applied for and received confirmation that funding is approved to a maximum of \$1,000,000.

- The Town signed an agreement shortly thereafter
- A project team was established and developed an outline for the necessary steps to enhance our current online service program
- Phase one of the project will include residential building permit application submissions through a new online service portal
- The project team extensively documented existing permit application processes and mapped to the desired future online portal procedures, streamlining processes where possible
- The vendor and Information Technology Division worked together to ensure the back end architecture and application was up-to-date and current processes optimized in order to support the addition of a new online portal. The Development Services project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

team members took part in and provided input to the design and development (look and feel) of the online portal

- Testing of the new online portal took place in August 2023
- The Town of Milton's Public Online Services Portal was launched live to residents on October 10, 2023.

Subsequent phases of this project will be developed for additional building permit types, as well as the Town's Engineering and Planning Divisions, following a stabilization and optimization period that will take place immediately after the Phase 1 go live.

REPORT

Background

Phase 1 implementation of Milton's Public Online Services Portal commenced shortly after January 19, 2022, following an announcement from the Province at the Ontario Housing Affordability Summit. Subsequently, the Province announced the implemented Streamline Development Approval Fund (SDAF) and the Town of Milton received funds from the Province of Ontario to implement a series of initiatives aimed at streamlining the development approval process to assist with coordination efforts to increase the supply of housing across the province.

Discussion

Phase 1 of the Portal was designed to serve as a baseline starting point for a comprehensive online platform for the submission, tracking, and processing of building permit applications. Key features and functionalities of the portal include:

1. **Online Application Submission:** The portal enables applicants to submit residential building permit applications electronically, eliminating the need for in-person visits to Development Services counter.
2. **Document Upload and Review:** Applicants can securely upload required documents, such as plans, drawings, and supporting materials, through the portal. Building Services staff can then review and provide feedback on these documents within the portal, facilitating a more efficient review process.
3. **Payment Processing:** The portal offers online payment options, allowing applicants to pay fees associated with building permits electronically. This will reduce the reliance

Discussion

on traditional payment methods, such as cheques or cash, and will expedite financial transaction processing for both the Town and applicants.

4. **Application Status Tracking:** Applicants can track the progress of their permit applications in real-time through the portal. This feature provides transparency and allows for better communication between applicants and the Building Service team.
5. **Communication and Notifications:** The portal incorporates a messaging system that enables notification between applicants and Building Services team. Automated notifications are also sent to applicants at key stages of the permit application process, keeping them informed of updates and requirements.
6. **Inspection Booking and Status Tracking:** Applicants can book required inspections, track the status and access completed inspection reports through the portal. This feature provides the applicant enhanced access to inspection results and the overall status of the building permit construction stages.

Impact and Benefits:

The implementation of phase one of the Town of Milton Public Online Services Portal will have several significant impacts and benefits for the Town of Milton:

1. **Efficiency:** The portal will streamline the overall permit application process. Electronic submission and review of applications, along with online payments, is intended to reduce administrative burdens and improve overall efficiency in the Building Department.
2. **Accessibility:** The portal's 24/7 availability and online accessibility will make it easier for applicants to apply for building permits, irrespective of their location or time constraints. This is intended to provide an increased convenience and improved accessibility for residents, businesses, and stakeholders.
3. **Savings:** The elimination of manual paperwork, travel, and in-person visits will result in considerable time and cost savings for applicants. The online payment system will also expedite fee processing, further contributing to overall time savings.
4. **Communication:** The portal's tracking and messaging features will improve communication between applicants and the Building Services team. Updates and notifications provide enhanced transparency and reduce the need for multiple inquiries, leading to improved customer satisfaction.
5. **Environmental:** The transition to electronic applications and document submission will significantly reduce the consumption of paper and other resources, positively

Discussion

impacting the environment and aligning with the Town's sustainability goals.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

In the Town's updated 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan, one of the strategic themes identified for the Town is to Innovate in Technology and Process. This means that the Town will focus on substantial investments in technology, process improvements and meaningful partnerships to improve customer service, embed sustainable practices and create a foundation for flattening long-term costs.

Conclusion:

The Phase 1 implementation of the Town of Milton's Public Online Services Portal has been successful in streamlining the residential permit application process (internally for staff, as well as externally), improving accessibility, and enhancing customer service. It aligns to the Town's desire to Innovate in Technology and Process as identified in the Town's recent Strategic Planning activities. The portal will have a positive impact on efficiency, transparency, and communication. It will also contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing paper consumption. Going forward, it is recommended that the Town continues to monitor user feedback and make necessary updates to ensure the portal remains a valuable resource for all stakeholders and continue with implementation of additional permit types throughout the business service areas.

Financial Impact

Funding of Phase 1 of the Town's Public Online Services Portal was through the Province's Streamline Development Approval Fund (SDAF).

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Hogan
Commissioner, Development Services

For questions, please contact: Colin Brook, Director, Building Phone: Ext. 2353
Services and Chief Building Official



Attachments

<https://www.milton.ca/en/living-in-milton/building-permits-application.aspx>

Approved by CAO
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer

Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.