



REPORT TO

## CORPORATE SERVICES, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

### SITE PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION - STREAMLINING THE PROCESS (ALL WARDS)

*"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."  
Philippians 4:13 (NRSVCE)*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
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### RECOMMENDATION REPORT

#### Vision:

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.*

#### Mission:

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.*

*We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*



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## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report recommends co-funding with both the Toronto District School Board and the City of Toronto, the salary/benefits of a Senior Planner at the City of Toronto. The role of the Senior Planner, a City employee, would be to be the main point of contact for both Boards regarding the Site Plan Approval process for new school and major addition projects. The dedicated Senior Planner would track progress and assist in resolving problems related to the Site Plan application for each project, for each Board, with the goal of reducing the timelines currently experienced for Site Plan Approval.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 28 hours*

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. Arising from the City-School Board Advisory Committee Working Group on the Site Plan Approvals process, the City of Toronto Planning lead, recommended that the City would be willing to cover 50% of the salary/benefits of a Senior Planner position at the City, with the school boards jointly covering the other 50% of the costs for a period of up to two years.
2. Strategic initiatives to improve timelines, reduce capital and soft costs and support the Board's capital program are presented and approved by the Board.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. Site Plan Approval is required for all new schools and most major additions prior to issuance of a building permit. The SPA process involves the architect of the project submitting detailed drawings that show the building on the site, and the design and conditions of the site. The purpose of the application is to ensure that the proposed development is compatible with the surrounding area and is in keeping with the Official Plan and all applicable laws and requirements for the proposed site. Site Plan applications are required to provide a significant amount of technical information including building set-back to the property line, building, height, footprint/density on the site, number of parking spaces, vehicular access to the building, fire-fighting, road and transportation requirements, storm water management, waste management, grading, number of trees, green roof and other Toronto Green Standard requirements.

2. The first submission is then followed by subsequent submissions and reviews by City staff, until all the technical requirements have been addressed to the satisfaction of City staff. When the process becomes prolonged and onerous with an unusual number of submissions, the Board incurs additional project soft costs in the form of additional consulting fees.
3. Since 2016, staff from all four school boards, have participated on a working committee with key City Planning staff regarding measures to streamline the Site Plan Approval (SPA) process. The working group committee has met four times since the first City-School Advisory meeting in 2016. **Appendix A** is a summary of the work undertaken to date at the working group.
4. Site Plan Approval for new schools and major additions can take between fifteen months to two years to complete. A building permit will not be issued by the City until the Board responds to any required conditions in the Notice of Approval Conditions (NOAC), and the Site Plan Agreement is registered. In most cases, the Building Department will not review building permit submissions until the Site Plan agreement is registered. In some cases, the Board has received a conditional building permit after receiving NOAC – however, full building permit will not be granted until final registration of the Site Plan Agreement.
5. In the case of new St. Joseph Morrow Park Secondary School, a Zoning application was also required prior to Site Plan Application – which added an additional year to the SPA process. In addition, the Board also required a demolition permit to demolish the former TDSB Cummer school on the site as well as the townhouses on Bayview. In total, this project has been seeking City approval to build the new school for a total of five years and has been in the SPA process for the new three-storey school for three years. Note, at the time of completing this report, NOAC is anticipated by the end of December.
6. Both St. Joseph Morrow Park and St. John the Evangelist are projects with complicated site-related issues that prolonged the SPA process – however, in the case of St. Paschal Baylon’s addition, the delay in receiving Site Plan Approval is related to engineering issues, addressing the requests from Toronto Water for both storm water management and fire-fighting service. As has been experienced, these technical issues are highly detailed and specific in nature, and are often related to the fact the City’s infrastructure is under serviced in the area.

7. The Board has ten (10) new schools and major additions approved, of which seven (7) will require Site Plan Approval – and three (3) may fall below the SPA threshold of 600 sq. metres. **Appendix B** provides further details regarding the projects that are currently in development.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. **Appendix C** provides a description of the role and responsibilities of the proposed dedicated Senior Planner position. As the main point of contact for school board applications, the Senior Planner will help other City Planning staff to understand the planning issues and concerns regarding school projects, in order to expedite the timelines for each review.
2. The City has a “fast-track” SPA process for projects that qualify under the Gold Star program. These are projects that would bring economic development to the City. As noted on the City’s web site, the Gold Star program assigns “*an Economic Development Officer as part of the City Planning or Toronto Building case-managed team. The team provides customized one-on-one assistance to help businesses navigate the review and approval process*”. Currently the City is reviewing the timelines under the Gold Star program.
3. The TCDSB typically engages a professional planner, as part of the consultant team, to navigate and assist with the preparation of the Site Plan approval process. Experience dealing with the City of Toronto, on similar institutional-type projects is a key criteria considered in the Board’s prequalification process for architects and the sub-consultants for all new schools and major addition projects.
4. The fees for Site Plan Approval and Building Permit for the last three new school projects are noted below:

SCHOOL/PROJECT	SPA FEE	BUILDING PERMIT
St. Joseph Morrow Park S.S.	\$29,174	\$319,815
St. Simon Elementary School	\$18,037	\$144,869
St. John the Evangelist	\$20,154	\$148,099

5. It is anticipated that the dedicated Senior Planner could also assist school boards with other planning areas of interest such as Vertical Schools, joint-

venture and community hub projects as well as advising regarding future growth and development in the City.

6. The two boards, TCDSB and TDSB, will share 50% of the costs associated with the Senior Planner position, with the City covering the other 50% of the costs. Each board's share is estimated to be in the range of \$65,000.00 year, including benefits.
7. TCDSB Staff will submit a request to the Ministry of Education to fund the costs of the dedicated Senior Planner as a unique cost to building in Toronto. If additional funding is not provided, the costs can be covered proportionally amongst the seven (7) new projects detailed in Appendix B.

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Staff will meet on a regular basis with the Senior Planner to review progress and individual projects. A joint-information workshop with key City and Board staff is currently being planned to launch this initiative and to introduce school design issues and strategies to other City planning staff.
2. A subsequent report will be provided to the Board upon completion of the first year of the two-year initiative, to assess the success of the initiative based on several key objectives
  - has the dedicated Senior Planner been effective in terms of liaising with other City planner and technical staff,
  - has the SPA timeline improved, and,
  - what have been the demonstrated benefits of supporting this position?

## **F. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

1. Upon approval to the recommendation, the Superintendent of Facilities will submit a formal letter of acceptance to the City of Toronto, Acting Director, Community Planning, East District.
2. Staff will also contact the Ministry of Education staff regarding this initiative and request unique funding to cover the board(s') share of the costs as a means of reducing the approvals timelines for new school construction.

## **G. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Board enter into a two-year agreement with the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board, to jointly share the costs of a dedicated Senior Planner as detailed in this report.
2. That TCDSB staff submit a request to the Ministry of Education to fund the costs of the dedicated Senior Planner as a unique site cost, proportional to each project.