

Lean Yellow Belt Project – Building Permit Model Review

Project Team

Project Lead:	Leslie Collins – Municipal Building Official
Team Members:	Jordan MacLaughlin, Nicole Jutzi, Tim Benedict
Organization:	City of Kitchener



Completing my Yellow Belt training gave me a fresh perspective on how processes work. It encouraged me to think critically about how we can make things smoother and more efficient; especially from the applicant's point of view. I now feel more confident bringing forward ideas and suggestions to improve our projects, knowing I have the tools that Lean has taught me to question where the bottleneck may be with our processes.

- Leslie Collins
Municipal Building Official



Challenges

- Builders often submit the same house model multiple times; each application requires a full review of all documents
- Large batches of permit applications (40+ in a single day) create review bottlenecks
- Different plan examiners reviewing the same model cause inconsistent results
- Missing the 10-day MMHA review timeline delays projects and increases costs for builders
- High workload increases stress on examiners and may require overtime



Objectives

- Complete model reviews before permit applications are submitted
- Limit model review to houses only
- Provide builders with a standardized procedure based on the model review process
- Ensure every plan examiner reviews the model once
- Reduce duplicate work and increase daily permit processing capacity



Solution



Held pre-submission meetings with builders to clearly communicate expectations and support smooth implementation



Added a certified plans folder in the AMANDA system (municipal permitting and licensing software), and maintained an Excel tracking log to monitor review status and assignments



Continued use of Sharefile for document submissions to ensure consistent and centralized access



Preparing a formal, standardized procedure for all builders based on the pilot program, targeted for broader rollout



Results



The pilot was successful, and two active builders are now using the program



Examiners can now process at least double the number of permits in a day



The certified plans folder in AMANDA streamlines tracking and reduces time spent managing reviews



Builders are happy the model review option is back and have adapted well after initial adjustments



Builders begin projects with a clear understanding of expectations for participation, established through pre-start meetings



Impact

This Lean Yellow Belt project streamlined the model review process, increasing daily capacity, ensuring consistent outcomes, and creating a smoother experience for builders.