



# Corporate Report

NO: R212

COUNCIL DATE: October 20, 2008

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: October 20, 2008  
FROM: General Manager, Planning and Development FILE: 4520-01  
SUBJECT: Update on Surrey's On-line Electrical Permit System –  
Meeting Sustainability Goals

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the City's On-line Electrical Permit system and to advise Council on how the system supports the goals of Surrey's Sustainability Charter.

## BACKGROUND

In early May 2008, Council received Corporate Report No. R078 – "eGovernment – On-Line Electrical Permits", which advised that an On-Line Electrical Permit system would be activated on May 21, 2008. The report highlighted some of the customer service benefits and other advantages of this system, including key features that make it user-friendly and a convenient way for electrical contractors to conduct business with the City. The system allows contractors to apply and pay for Electrical Permits using the Internet.

On September 29, 2008, Council adopted the Surrey Sustainability Charter, which includes a Vision of Sustainability for the City of Surrey that is to be achieved through an Action Framework. This framework is built upon three Pillars of Sustainability (Economic, Environmental, Socio-cultural), three Spheres of Influence (Corporate Operations, Municipal Jurisdiction, External Organizations) and three implementation time frames (Immediate, Medium and Long Term).

## DISCUSSION

The Electrical On-line Permit system, which is a convenient, user-friendly, self-service approach for electrical contractors to do business with the City, has been popular since its

introduction in May 2008 with positive feedback having received from the electrical contractors in relation to the time and money it saves them in not having to attend at City Hall.

The new system also supports the City's sustainability objectives as articulated in the recently adopted Surrey Sustainability Charter. By making the City a more convenient place to do business, it will make Surrey more attractive to businesses a place to locate. This is one of the objectives under the Economic Pillar of the City's Sustainability Charter, which focuses on the attraction, growth, and retention of businesses.

The On-line permitting system also supports goals contained within the Environmental Pillar of the Sustainability Charter. By doing business with the City on-line vehicle trips to City Hall are eliminated, which has the effect of reducing greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise result from such vehicle trips.

A review and analysis of Electrical Permit data, related to contractors utilizing the Electrical On-Line Permit system, was conducted for the period of May 21, 2008 (date of activation) to August 31, 2008. During this period of time the City processed 742 permits on-line. Based on average trip lengths to City Hall and the number vehicle trips that this number of permits would have otherwise generated, a calculation of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that were eliminated has been completed and annualized. It is estimated that the on-line electrical permitting system will result in an annual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 70,000 pounds (32,000 kilograms) or approximately 35 tons of GHGs.

The Planning and Development Department is collaborating with the Information Technology Division to expand the on-line (Internet-based) permit application system technology to other permit processing areas. This will not only serve to further enhance customer service, but will also serve to advance the City's efforts to meet the economic and environmental goals set out in the Sustainability Charter.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Electrical On-Line Permit system was activated on May 21, 2008 and has been well accepted by the industry. The system has also resulted in sustainability benefits to the City in relation to its goals under the Economic and Environmental Pillars in the recently adopted Surrey Sustainability Charter. Expanding the use of the On-Line Permit technology to other operational areas is currently being explored and will be the subject of future reports to Council.

Jean Lamontagne  
General Manager  
Planning and Development

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