

NO: **R077**

COUNCIL DATE: **April 22, 2013**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **April 22, 2013**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development**

FILE: **6880-01**

SUBJECT: **Improvements to the Development Inspections Processes**

RECOMMENDATION

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

BACKGROUND

As part of ongoing improvements to the delivery of services by the City and consistent with the findings of the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Committee, Planning and Development staff has completed improvements related to:

- inter-departmental communications in support of expedited processing of land development applications;
- enhanced e-business (on-line) processes and reporting; and
- enhanced inspections supported by mobile devices.

These improvements are detailed in the following section of the report.

DISCUSSION

Starting in December 2010 the building inspections processes transitioned from pen and paper approaches to the use of mobile field digital technology. City staff in the Building Division was the first to be able to receive "real time" inspection results from the building inspectors in the field, the inspection results could be sent directly to builders by way of e-mail upon the conclusion of an inspection and multiple copies of inspection results could be printed on building sites so that the general contractor is able to distribute them to trades quickly. The holders of building permits could also request building inspections on-line.

More recently in December 2012, the plumbing inspections processes have been transitioned to the same technology as the building inspections with the same improvements to customer service. This was followed in February 2013 by the moving the Trees and Landscape inspections processes to the new technology and finally as of April 2013, the Electrical inspections are now fully integrated with the other inspections areas in the use of the new technology offering the same service to their customers.

These changes represent a major milestone for the inspection processes, which are now completely digital and in "real time". These improvements help staff and clients to communicate more easily and provide clear deficiency lists that can be used as the basis for builders to complete their projects in an efficient manner.

Next steps:

Staff will be moving forward with:

- a seamless process for business license inspection referrals;
- expanded smart phones offerings;
- automated reminders for both clients and City staff in relation to work processes;
- additional on-line service options; and
- mobile payment options.

These improvements will allow for the capture data that will inform the further streamlining of City operations and the development of information and apps that would be beneficial to the City's customers. This work will align with the growing use of mobile devices by the public in relation to meeting their on-going daily needs.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The above-listed improvements have reduced the use of paper files and reduced the need for trips to and from City Hall by applicants and by City staff. These outcomes support the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly, scope action items:

- SC1: Enhance accessibility to information;
- EC7: Promote sustainable building and development practices; and
- EN2, EN11: Reduce waste and GHG emissions.

CONCLUSION

Staff continues to focus on improving the development approval processes as outlined in the results of the work of the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Committee. The improvements listed in this report are the latest in a series of improvements that have been implemented over the last number of years that are collectively focused on improving the service experience of the City's customers.

Original signed by
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