

NO: R190

COUNCIL DATE: **SEPTEMBER 23, 2013**

---

## **REGULAR COUNCIL**

**TO: Mayor & Council**

**DATE: September 16, 2013**

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

**FILE: 6880-01**

**SUBJECT: E-business Enhancements to Inspection Services**

---

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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

## **INTENT**

This report details the most recent enhancements and streamlining to the Planning and Development Department's electronic (e-business) service delivery program.

## **BACKGROUND**

As part of ongoing improvements and streamlining of the delivery of services by the City, and consistent with the findings of the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Committee, Planning and Development staff has been undertaking improvements to the City's building inspections service by means of offering access to a broader range of such services by means of mobile devices and enhanced e-business (on-line) processes and related reporting.

Since December 2010, the building inspections processes have been transitioning from manual pen and paper approaches to the use of mobile field digital technology with a view to improving customer service.

Each of the four inspection groups (Building, Plumbing, Electrical, and Trees and Landscaping) implemented an online process of recording and updating field inspection results. Builders are provided with printed receipts of the inspection results immediately upon the conclusion of an inspection and the information is immediately uploaded to the respective City file.

The electronic recording of inspection results was built and transitioned in separate waves for each inspection group. This staggered approach has allowed "lessons-learned" to be leveraged for each subsequent rollout ensuring a successful transition for both City staff and the City's customers.

## DISCUSSION

As of mid-September 2013, the four separate inspection groups have been successfully integrated with the new online processes. With integration, an inspector on a job site has the ability to view the status of other inspections for any particular site (e.g., such as building, electrical and plumbing). This integration will improve the turn-around time for customers in completing the inspections process, reduce ambiguity of inspection results and improve the inspections tracking process for staff.

The integration project has resulted in some inspections being amalgamated for efficiency. For example, three plumbing inspections from the former process have been consolidated into one inspection. These improvements reduced the red-tape associated with the inspections process.

Other e-business (on-line) services are also being enhanced. These include the ability to apply for a range of permits electronically and to make requests for inspections on-line. A key initiative in this regard will be expanded mobile device offerings. The building smartphone application allows customers to view their building permits and the inspections associated with their permits, and to request building inspections from their smartphone. This application also provides automated text messaging to customers when inspectors are on route to building sites for inspections and allows inspectors to email inspection results to the builder.

## SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The above-described enhancements to inspections with mobile devices and enhanced e-business (on-line) processes and reporting will assist in achieving the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly, the following Charter Scope action items:

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

## CONCLUSION

The enhancements to the inspection processes to allow for the use of mobile field technology and e-business (on-line) processes and reporting have enhanced customer service and created new efficiencies for the City. In the coming year, staff plans to consolidate and expand online services, which will further improve the service experience of the City's customers.

*Original signed by*

Jean Lamontagne  
General Manager,  
Planning and Development

GF:saw

v:\wp-docs\building\13\data\july-sept\091212iogf.docx  
DRV 9/18/13 8:54 AM