Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – June 13, 2007

REPORTS

Item No. 7 **Overview of BizPaL Initiative – A Project of Industry Canada in conjunction with Provinces/Territories and Municipalities to Streamline Business Permits and Licenses**
File FL-7

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

RE: Overview of the BizPaL Initiative, a Project of Industry Canada in Conjunction with Provinces/ Territories and Municipalities to Streamline Business Permits and Licenses

FOR SUBMISSION TO: Executive Policy Committee

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED BY: Jim Paterson, Acting Director, Planning, Property and Development

REPORT DATE: May 22, 2007

RECOMMENDATION: That this report be received as information.

Report Summary

Key Issues:

Overview of BizPaL

The City of Winnipeg has entered into a partnership with the Province of Manitoba and Industry Canada, to provide the BizPaL service to potential businesses wishing to establish themselves in Winnipeg.

BizPaL is a free of charge, web-based service, developed by Industry Canada, that allows business clients to easily generate a customized list of the permits and licenses they require from all levels of government by answering some simple generic questions about their business. BizPaL allows partners to present the BizPaL service to their clients in the context of their own website, with the client never needing to know that the data is actually coming from the centralized BizPaL server. BizPaL aggregates license and permit information from multiple jurisdictions and helps businesses to navigate this information through a simple online question and answer wizard. It also uses basic information about each permit and license including cost, frequency of renewal, contact information, and wherever possible a link to additional information located on a participating jurisdiction's website.

There are significant benefits to the BizPaL Initiative for both the customer and the organization – these include time and money savings, better government service and improved business planning capability.

A firm public launch date for the BizPaL service on the City's website has not been set; however, based on the work accomplished to-date a Fall 2007 launch date is anticipated.

Organizational Commitments:

Start Up

- The start-up costs for the City of Winnipeg, associated with the BizPaL implementation are limited to time spent by City of Winnipeg staff to accurately populate and maintain the BizPaL database, setup and maintain the website interface, test and communicate to the public the benefits of BizPaL.

Sustainment

- The Province of Manitoba has agreed to cover all costs associated with the "hosting" of the BizPaL system on an on-going basis for all municipalities and cities.

- There will be an ongoing staff resource commitment required to update the BizPaL database and website. According to other jurisdictions who have implemented BizPaL, the time commitment is minimal and can be incorporated into the daily duties of existing staff

Implications of the Recommendation(s):

General Implications

( ) None

(X) For the organization overall and/or for other departments

(X) For the community and/or organizations external to the City

( ) Involves a multi-year contract

Comment(s): The organization will benefit from the implementation of BizPaL in the following ways:

- Less time spent with clients who can self-serve
- Training tool for permit and license requirements for new staff at front desk/business help centres
- Reduced enforcement costs

The community and external organizations will benefit from the implementation of BizPaL in the following ways:

- Provides a comprehensive overview of requirements for all levels of government
- 24/7 convenience - accessible from any Internet connect point
- Reduce time of compliance and opening of the business.
- Reduce or eliminate unexpected requirements from government

- Early detection of problems with business venture.

Policy Implications

(X) No

( ) Yes

Comment(s):

Regulatory Implications

( ) None

(X) Eliminates or reduces regulatory impact

( ) Proposes regulatory impact

Comment(s):

Although regulatory requirements will continue to exist, BizPaL will have a positive impact on the applicant's experience by:

- Providing a comprehensive overview of requirements for all levels of government
- Reducing unexpected requirements from government
- Reducing time of compliance and opening of the business.

Environmental Implications

(X) No

( ) Yes

Comment(s):

Human Resources Implications

( ) No

(X) Yes

Comment(s):

The start-up costs for the City of Winnipeg, associated with the BizPaL implementation are limited to time spent by City of Winnipeg staff to accurately

populate and maintain the BizPaL database, setup and maintain the website interface, test and communicate to the public the benefits of BizPaL.

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Financial Implications

(X) Within approved current and/or capital budget

( ) Current and/or capital budget adjustment required

Comment(s):

Start-Up

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Sustainment

- The Province of Manitoba has agreed to cover all costs associated with the "hosting" of the BizPaL system on an on-going basis for all municipalities and cities.

- There will be an ongoing staff resource commitment required to update the BizPaL database and website. According to other jurisdictions who have implemented BizPaL, the time commitment is minimal and can be incorporated into the daily duties of existing staff

Report

REASON FOR THE REPORT:

To provide on overview of the BizPaL Initiative, the City's involvement and commitment, benefits to the business community and the organization, and projected timelines for launch.

HISTORY:

The BizPaL initiative, a project of Industry Canada, arose in 2005 from the realization of the need to ease the regulatory burden placed on small businesses and a desire to make government services more client-focused. The project is the result of a collaborative effort involving consultation with provincial, territorial and municipal officials from every region of Canada, as well as officials of several federal departments.

Currently there are nine territories/ provinces and 36 regions/ municipalities involved in the BizPaL Initiative.

In December 2006 the Province approached the City to become involved in Biz Pal. The City's CIO agreed, and assigned the project lead role to Planning, Property and Development.

Representatives from Planning, Property and Development, Community Services, Public Works and Corporate Communications have been engaged to undertake the various implementation activities required to activate BizPaL in Winnipeg over the next few months, in preparation for a late Fall 2007 public launch of the first phase of BizPaL on the City's website.

DISCUSSION:

What is BizPaL?

BizPaL is a free of charge, web-based service that allows business clients to easily generate a customized list of the permits and licenses they require from all levels of government by answering some simple generic questions about their business. BizPaL allows partners to present the BizPaL service to their clients in the context of their own website, with the client never needing to know that the data is actually coming from the centralized BizPaL server. BizPaL aggregates license and permit information from multiple jurisdictions and helps businesses to navigate this information through a simple online question and answer wizard. It also uses basic information about each permit

and license including cost, frequency of renewal, contact information, and wherever possible a link to additional information located on a participating jurisdiction's website.

Saskatoon and Ottawa are two of the largest municipalities that have launched the BizPaL service –Saskatoon's website at www.saskatoon.ca illustrates the seamless integration of BizPaL into a municipal home page.

The implementation of BizPaL in Winnipeg will enhance efforts toward the realization of Red Tape Commission Recommendation 12: *Take additional steps to support the Planning, Property and Development (and other departments) as it accelerates service speed for permit approvals.*

Benefits of the BizPaL Initiative:

Time savings:

- 24/7 convenience accessible from any Internet connect point
- Links and contacts for permits and licenses
- Impact of activities known up front
- Reduce time of compliance and opening of the business.
- Less time spent with clients who can self-serve
- Training tool for new staff at front desk/business help centres

Money Savings:

- Private intermediary costs reduced/eliminated
- Fewer fines with increase in compliancy/ Increased compliance revenue
- Better budget planning
- Early detection of problems with business venture.
- Reduced enforcement costs

Better government service and business planning:

- Simple and easy access to information.
- Entrepreneurs become more comfortable with knowledge of compliance status
- Comprehensive overview of requirements for all levels of government reduces unexpected requirements
- Potentially eliminates red tape for permits and licenses.

Organizational Commitments:

Start-Up

- The start-up costs for the City of Winnipeg, associated with the BizPaL implementation are limited to time spent by existing City of Winnipeg staff to

accurately populate and maintain the BizPaL database, setup and maintain the website interface, test and communicate to the public the benefits of BizPaL.

Sustainment

- The Province of Manitoba has agreed to cover all costs associated with the "hosting" of the BizPaL system on an on-going basis for all municipalities and cities.

- There will be an ongoing staff resource commitment required to update the BizPaL database and website. According to other jurisdictions who have implemented BizPaL, the time commitment is minimal and can be incorporated into the daily duties of existing staff

Current Status/Next Steps:

Work Completed To-Date:

- An orientation to the BizPaL initiative was held with representatives from Industry Canada and the Province of Manitoba on January 19, 2007.

- The City prioritized business types to be included in the first phase of the Winnipeg BizPaL service from the National Association of Industry Codes Standard (NAICS) listings, based on business types that are represented by at least 75 operations in Winnipeg.

- An inter-departmental team comprised of representatives from Community Services, Planning, Property and Development and Public Works was formed to create a ***Master List of Permits and Licenses.*** This marks the first time that a comprehensive document of this nature has been compiled, and this alone provides a tremendous benefit to the organization.

- The City of Winnipeg's Inter-departmental Team completed the Business Process Mapping stage for Phase I on March 6 – 8, 2007. Permit and License requirements for the selected business types were identified and entered into the BizPaL database by representatives from Industry Canada. The Province participated in the mapping sessions as well.

- A "Gap document" outlining the outstanding information required to complete Phase I mapping has been forwarded to the City for completion by end of April 2007.

- Weekly conference calls occur between the City the Province and Industry Canada to report on progress to-date and keep the project on track.

Next steps:

- The following activities must be completed before Phase I of the BizPaL service can be launched for Winnipeg.
    - Administrative training for selected department staff to input the data
    - Set up of the website interface
    - Testing
    - Soft launch of Phase I
    - Communications activities (internal and external)
    - Full public launch of Phase I

- The above activities will be undertaken in conjunction with Industry Canada and the Province of Manitoba

- A firm public launch date has not yet been established for Phase I; however, based on the work accomplished to-date, a Fall 2007 launch date is anticipated

- Following the full launch of Phase I, work will commence on Phase II, with the next set of prioritized business types being mapped for inclusion on the website

- It is anticipated that all phases of BizPaL will be implemented by year end 2007

- There will be an ongoing requirement for updating of the BizPaL database to ensure that permit and license information is complete and accurate

Financial Impact Statement Date: April 30, 2007

Project Name:

Overview of the BizPaL Initiative, a Project of Industry Canada in Conjunction with Provinces/ Territories and Municipalities to Streamline Business Permits and Licenses

COMMENTS:

As this report is to be received as information only, there are no financial implications associated with this recommendation.

"original signed by"
Mike McGinn, CA
Manager of Finance

IN PREPARING THIS REPORT THERE WAS:

Internal Consultation With and Concurrence By:
NA

External Consultation With:
NA

THIS REPORT SUBMITTED BY:

Department	Planning, Property and Development
Division	Development and Inspections
Prepared by:	Patti Regan, Permits X-Press Project Manager
File No.	

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