

Project Charter: **Business License Review- 2017**

Background

As described in the 2015-2018 Corporate Strategic Plan- Greater Together Implementation Plan, under the Growth and Economic Development Pillar, Priority C *“Provide a welcoming environment that is conducive to investment and reduction of red tape by removing barriers and attracting new business”*, Item C(e) is *“to introduce a review of the Business Licensing System in 2017. The review will include the creation of a working group, broad community consultation and strategies to create a business friendly licensing environment.”*

The *Municipal Act S.O. 2001, c. 25* permits municipalities the authority to license businesses. Sec. 10 (2) states *“A single-tier municipality may pass by-laws respecting....Business Licensing”* and Part IV of the Act sets out the powers in more detail and includes certain limitations and conditions for business licensing.

Advancements in technology, use of the internet and the introduction of the sharing economy have contributed to a diverse economic landscape and in many cases, a number of business transactions may no longer take place within a traditional store front. These advancements need to be reflected in the Business Licence By-law.

Scope

The basic guiding principles of business licensing by a municipality are to ensure the health and well-being of residents, support quality of life and to protect consumers and business operators. The By-law ensures that businesses follow regulations, building, fire, and other community safety requirements and are zoned appropriately.

Business licenses protect business owners who are compliant with legislation and regulation and ensure a level playing field for business operators in the community. The primary purpose of business licensing within a municipality is to encourage and support legitimate business within the community whereby business owners/operators fully understand the purpose for and requirements of their business licence and are held accountable through regulatory inspections upon application and over time.

To align legislation with guiding principles, staff will compare the current City of Greater Sudbury Business License and Registration By-laws with best practices and similar municipal comparators. In addition to reviewing what is currently covered, staff will develop preliminary options for Council that will provide for a By-law that is easily understood by business owners and likewise enforceable by the municipality. It has been noted by both the business community and CGS staff that the current licensing regime is overly complicated and the current fee structure is cumbersome and needs to be simplified. This review will further support the establishment of a fee structure that aligns with the level of service, and more appropriately supports cost recovery for service, including regulatory inspections.

Lead by the Manager of Security and By-law Services and internal working team, this initiative will include formal internal and external stakeholder meetings to discuss the current business license and registration program and how it impacts each respective area. With feedback from stakeholder sessions, staff will work to establish clear and

concise recommendations for Council to modernize the business licence program. Staff will actively consider opportunities to collaborate with regulatory agencies involved in business licensing and consider online/automated applications and renewals.

In November, the stakeholder consultation portion of this initiative will include two formal Open Houses, one aimed at feedback from current or future business licence holders and the second one for the public, who may have a specific interest in bringing forward their ideas or concerns. Staff will publish an online survey to seek the input of residents regarding what businesses should be licenced and how the City licenses them, while asking specifically for input and concerns to be brought forward.

Through this comprehensive review of Business Licensing in the City of Greater Sudbury, supported by the engagement and feedback of residents and stakeholders, staff will bring forward clear and concise recommendations that will modernize and make the business license program more efficient and customer focused. This will be achieved while focusing on guiding principles of; health and safety of residents, consumer protection and nuisance control in neighborhoods.

The project will include research on best practices in business licensing programs, both in Ontario and across Canada and will consider research on business licensing models, particularly as it relates to the sharing economy and changes in the regulatory environment.

Goals

- 1) Make best recommendation for changes to Business License By-law that balances the need for the protection of health and well-being of residents, quality of life in neighborhoods and the protection of consumers and business operators in the completion of business.
- 2) Actively engage the community in a conversation about business licensing and how to achieve a balance between the protection of public safety and consumer rights with business opportunities.
- 3) Review comparable Business Licensing Municipal programs and fee structures.
- 4) Review existing technological supports to support a business licensing program that is modern, efficient and accessible.

Key Stakeholders

Client	City of Greater Sudbury Mayor and Council
Stakeholders	City of Greater Sudbury Business Community, City of Greater Sudbury Staff, Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, GSDC, SDHU, GSPS, Business Associations
Sponsors	Kevin Fowke, General Manager, Corporate Services
Project Lead	Brendan Adair, Manager Security and By-Law Services

Project team members	Eleethea Savage- Business Development Officer Glen Ferguson- Senior Planner Jason Radley- Building Inspector Melissa Laalo- Coordinator of Bylaw and Animal Control Inclusion of one or more stakeholder representatives
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Project Milestones

Information Report to Council- October 17, 2017

Internal Stakeholder Meeting- Week of October 30-November 03, 2017

One-on-One Meetings with Stakeholders- Fall, 2017

Public Open House Meeting- Businesses and the Public Sessions- November 16, 2017

Online Survey- November 16-24, 2017

Report to Council- Proposed Theme(s) and Principles of New Business Licence By-law-
 March 27, 2018

Signatures

Kevin Fowke, Project Sponsor	Brendan Adair, Project Lead