



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 16, 2012
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: March 27, 2012

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Chief License Inspector
SUBJECT: By-Law Amendments to Implement On-Line Dog Licensing

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve amendments to the Animal Control By-Law which would assist in streamlining application processes and facilitate on-line dog license application and renewal; and
- B. THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward by-laws to amend the Animal Control By-Law, generally in accordance with Appendix A.

REPORT SUMMARY

As part of the Vancouver Services Review (VSR), the City is undertaking a transformation of its permits and licensing operations. From IT systems to business processes, the project and the departments are collaborating to reduce the number of IT systems, simplify the customer experience with simple permits and licenses transactions and implement improvements regarding complex permits such as online plan viewing and permit bundling. The simple permits and licenses transactions represent 90% of all permit and license transactions, the majority (70%) of which are dog and business licenses, residential parking and fire alarm permits. These changes will reduce the time required to get a permit or license and number of in-person visits required and offer more online solutions. In order to implement the project and realize its intended benefits, some by-law amendments are required.

The purpose of this report is to request Council's approval for amendments to the Animal Control By-Law which would streamline application processes in order to facilitate an improved on-line dog licence application and renewal system. In addition, staff are making process changes and technology improvements to improve customer service for both dog and business licenses, which together make up 45% of the City's simple permits and licenses transactions. Should Council accept the above recommendations, this will allow staff to streamline licensing process with the goal of having 85% of dog and business license applications/renewals online within two years of implementation.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Council's *Vancouver Services Review* emphasizes improving the cost efficiency of City operations, without sacrificing the quality of services. On January 17, 2012, Council passed a specific motion, part of which proposed the following:

"Undertake a review of City regulations and permitting processes, with the goal of supporting local businesses through updated regulations, improved speed and greater efficiency of processes; and"

GENERAL MANAGERS COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the recommendations in this report.

REPORT

Background/Context

This report identifies the challenges of the current processes for dog and business license applications and renewals and focuses on the project's goal to implement an efficient, effective, reliable and sustainable on-line service delivery, thereby improving customer service with a simplified and streamlined process.

The on-line implementation phase of the project for dog licenses is scheduled to be rolled out in May/June 2012 with the online renewal for business licences being rolled out by the end of August, 2012.

Strategic Analysis

Current Challenges

Staff have identified the current challenges and various changes needed to streamline and simplify the licensing application process as summarized in the following table.

Challenges in the Current State	Changes
<p>Technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Minimal on-line offering. * Duplicate data entry for new dog licence applications. * 'Back of house' labour intensive duties eg. manually printing and mailing of renewal bills & licenses. 	<p>Technology Improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Enhanced on-line capabilities eliminate need for duplicate entry * Upgrades to allow more automation of processes eg. send renewals via email, customer ability to print business licence
<p>Processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Upfront requirements for dog & business licenses eg. photo identification and qualifying documents. * Heavy volume of walk-in customers and mail during peak renewal period for business licenses that require additional temporary staff to be hired. * Multiple licensing of businesses. 	<p>Streamline Processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * No ID required for low risk permits by moving to an honour system for applications with a risk based enforcement model involving periodic audits. * Explore opportunities to simplify processes for certain license categories. * Reduce the number of business license categories and modernize these categories to reflect current business realities. * Reduce multiple licensing of businesses based on a thorough review of the reduced business license categories.
<p>Dog License Regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fee structure * 6 geographical areas * Proof of veterinarian certificate verifying alteration 	<p>By-law changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Amendments to the Animal Control By-law as summarized in Appendix A.

Future State

The future state involves a simplified new application and renewal licensing processes as follows:

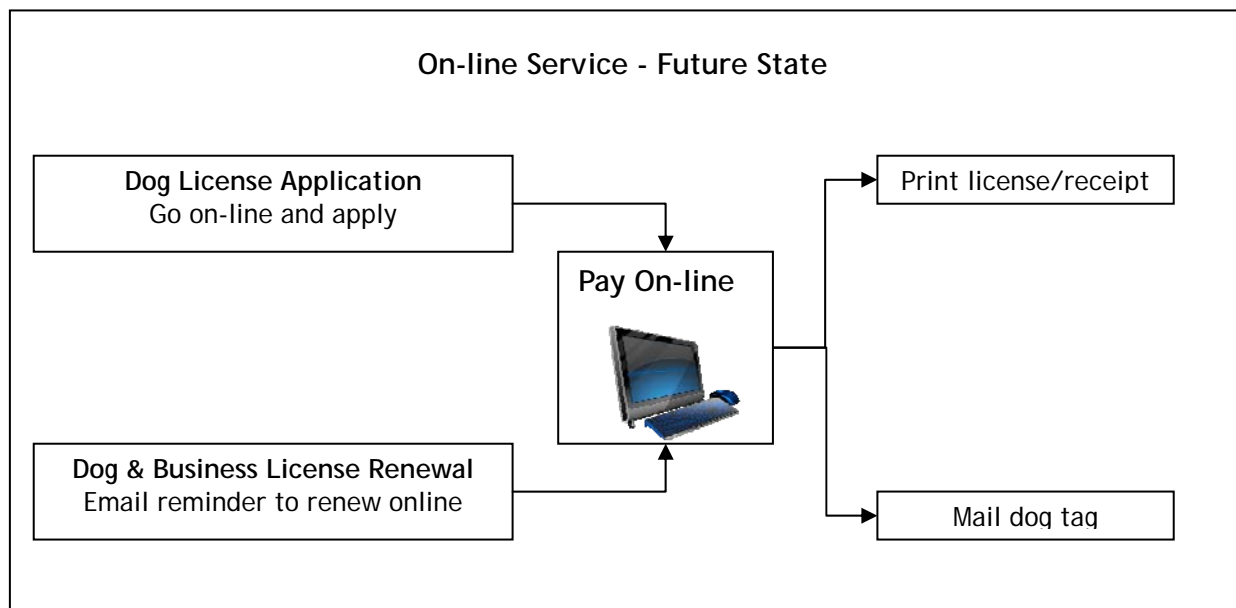
1. New dog license applications

Customers purchasing dog licenses will be able to apply, pay on-line and print their receipt in a single sitting without having to provide any documentation. A dog tag will then be mailed out.

2. Annual renewal of dog and business licenses

The new online system will generate an automated e-mail renewal notice to customers with a link to a web page that will allow the customer to pay and print their business licence or their receipt (for dog owners).

The future state is shown in the diagram below.



The process changes identified above together with the new technology offering will improve customer service, internal process efficiencies and support the City's sustainability objectives for both dog and business licenses. The current on-line offerings for dog and business license renewals record a usage of 58% and 30% respectively; however the current system is still heavily paper-based and manual. With an improved on-line system, the target is for on-line usage of 85% overall within two years of implementation.

The proposed amendments for the Animal Control By-law are required to streamline and facilitate the improved on-line offering for dog licenses.

Benefits

Once the simplified on-line process is implemented, customer service and processing efficiency benefits will be realized. The benefits expected are:

- Improved customer service
 - Faster application processing
 - Ability to update information instantly on-line
 - Single-sitting transactions
- Increased efficiencies
 - Less duplicate data entry

- Automated processes
- Fewer mail-outs
- Staff efficiencies
- Cost savings
 - Postage for fewer mail-outs
 - Reduced printing costs
 - Hiring of fewer temporary staff (Business license renewal period)
- Increased revenue
 - Additional revenue from anticipated increase in number of licenses due to simplified processes

Research of other Cities

For comparison, staff researched and summarized the application options available, as shown in the following table, for dog and business licenses in the following cities: Calgary, Coquitlam, Edmonton, Surrey and Toronto.

It should be noted that even though new and renewal licensing on-line options are available for customers in some of the researched cities, none provide the capability for a customer to print their own license off-site in a single sitting. All new and renewal license applications are checked, issued, printed 'back of house' and mailed to customers by their licensing staff.

	Calgary	Coquitlam	Edmonton	Surrey	Toronto	Vancouver
Dog Licenses						
On-line: New Applications*	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Renewals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volume of Licenses	110,988	5,847	Unknown	Unknown	59,181	24,000
% of On-line use	56%	27%	Unknown	Unknown	45%	58%
Business Licenses						
On-line: New Applications*	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Renewals	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volume of Licenses	31,830	5,650	Unknown	16,000	Unknown	51,400
% of On-line use	N/A	20%	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	30%

* Those cities with online services have only partially automated capability (customers may access online screens, but processing may involve manual processing)

Animal Control By-Law Amendments

The table below summarizes the proposed changes to the Animal Control By-law and associated rationale.

	Existing Regulation	Proposed Changes	Rationale
Dog License Renewal Date	Dog licence renewal dates vary for each of 6 geographic areas Pro-rate fees for 1 st licence term based on customer renewal dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate geographic areas Implement renewal date = date of issuance Eliminate pro-rating 	Reduces staff time and confusion for the public when applying for a license part way through their licence term or moving from one geographic district to another.
Fees	\$38 spayed/neutered \$71 not spayed/neutered	\$38 for all dogs	Fee incentive no longer required as a majority of owners already spay/neuter their dogs and stray dog overpopulation is no longer an issue.
Proof of Spaying/Neutering	Vet certificate required or verification	Certificate not required	The higher dog license fee is proposed to be eliminated.

Presently, the Animal Control By-Law has a cumbersome geographic-based licence system, separate license fee for spayed/neutered dogs (\$38) and dogs that haven't been spayed/neutered (\$71), with qualification for the reduced fee contingent upon the provision of a veterinarian certificate. The proposed by-law changes will enable an effective, user-friendly on-line dog license application and renewal process.

Implications

Financial

Currently, about 24% of the entire dog population (100,000 dogs) in Vancouver are licensed and out of the 24,000 licenses issued, approximately 90% are for spayed/neutered animals. Under the proposed single fee dog licensing scheme, the 2,400 (10%) dog owners with pets that have not been spayed/neutered would pay \$38/licence, resulting in an approximate \$80,000 annual loss in revenue.

An efficient and simplified application process will facilitate additional licensing when combined with other measures such as a new public relations campaign, promotional incentives along with ongoing enforcement. The new processes combined with the technology upgrades will permit administrative efficiencies. Administrative savings of \$66,000 annually in licensing renewal costs have been reflected in the 2012 Operating Budget given the progress made in the current online offerings over the past few years. Further cost savings in temporary help and printing/ mailing costs are expected with the implementation of the improved on-line offering and future increases in online renewals. As a result, forgone revenue for dog licenses in the short-term will be offset by increase in future annual license fee revenues and cost savings. There will be no adjustments to the approved 2012 Operating Budget.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommend that Council approve amendments to the Animal Control By-Law which would streamline application processes in order to facilitate on-line dog license application and renewal. These by-law amendments together with process changes and technology upgrades will improve customer service for licensing processes and create administrative efficiencies.

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Draft Amendments to Animal Control By-Law No. 9150

Section 3.2

Implement dog license renewal date based on the date of license issuance.

Section 3.3

Delete options to pro-rate dog license applications fees; and

Delete requirement to provide veterinarian certificate verifying alteration.

Schedule A

Delete entire schedule

Schedule B

Eliminate fee for unaltered dog and rename to Schedule A.

Schedule C

Rename as Schedule B.