

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: April 22, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Ian Wells, Acting Deputy City Manager

SUBJECT: UBCM Local Government Program Services for the Local Government Development Approvals Program

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. APPROVES that the City of Prince George submit an application under UBCM's 2021 Local Government Development Approvals Program up to the amount of \$500,000 to review and improve existing processes associated with development approvals; and
2. AUTHORIZES the Acting Deputy City Manager and Director of Finance to enter into any associated funding agreements should the grant application be successful.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's support for a grant application to the UBCM Local Government Development Approvals Program.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2019, the Province of BC published a report titled, *Development Approvals Process Review*. This report was created through province-wide local government and industry stakeholder consultation regarding development approval processes in BC, the challenges with the current processes, and the opportunities to improve upon them.

The grant for the Local Government Development Approvals Program is in part aimed at helping local governments fund process improvement initiatives that the municipality may lack the capacity (i.e. financial and/or expertise) to complete on their own.

DISCUSSION:

Administration recognizes that time is of the essence for developing in our community given the construction season is limited by our four season climate. Administration, therefore, understands efficiency is key in the approval process for development applications.

Administration is aware that the steps of our existing development approval processes require further attention and improvement.

Through the grant application, Administration would like to propose that focus be geared toward the following:

1. Internal review of current development approval processes for the most common application types;
2. Creating a development approvals process guide for the customer and staff; and,
3. Enhancing our existing software with compatible programs to provide the customer a user friendly, contactless, 24/7/365 online application option.

Administration would like to provide customers with clear, concise and consistent messaging around the information needed for development applications to facilitate an efficient process of a development application. The three key areas noted above will also involve collaboration with our customers to ensure improvements are informed, and supported by the customer.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Administration recommends that Council endorse the grant application for the Local Government Development Approvals Program. Funding from this program will help improve development approval processes, provide clear communication on expectations of information needed for applications (for both the customer and staff), and enhance our existing software systems to facilitate a simple online application process.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Ian Wells, Acting Deputy City Manager

PREPARED BY: Deanna Wasnik, Manager of Development Services

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

Meeting Date: 2021/04/26