

Urban Planning and Development Program Enhancements Budget Adjustment – Enforcement Workflows

ISSUE

This report provides an update on implementation of the POSSE Land Management System (POSSE LMS) and seeks approval for a budget adjustment to expand the scope of the project to include implementation of Bylaw Compliance and enforcement workflows associated with the building and plumbing permit program.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council that an additional \$343,000 in funding be allocated to Capital Project 2169 Urban Planning and Development Program Enhancements and be funded as outlined in the report.

BACKGROUND

Capital Project 2169, Urban Planning and Development Program Enhancements, was initiated in 2019 to support online services and program enhancements related to the building and development permit program. To date, \$2.865 million has been approved for this project, to support the program enhancements including the procurement and implementation of POSSE LMS and an Electronic Plan Review system.

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting on March 23, 2020, received a [report](#) outlining scope options for the implementation of POSSE LMS. City Council approved funding to implement the original scope of the project and requested that Administration report back on estimated costs and a funding plan to expand the scope of the project to include Bylaw Compliance workflows.

POSSE LMS software provides an integrated solution with an online customer portal, which supports permitting and licencing workflows within Building Standards, Planning and Development, and Community Standards, while offering an interface between workgroups for improved coordination. POSSE LMS provides a robust online portal for customers to submit and manage their permit applications, receive real-time status change notifications, pay online, book inspections and access information on their permits.

On March 1, 2022, Phase 1 of POSSE LMS was implemented with the launch of the POSSE LMS online customer portal. This initial phase includes building and development permits, plumbing permits and associated inspection workflows.

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Phase 2 of the project kicked off on May 31, 2022 and will incorporate the full suite of planning, business license and taxi-related workflows. A summary of workflows and implementation dates are provided (see Appendix 1). Workflows associated with Phase 2 are targeted to be implemented by end of Q1 2023.

[The Construction Codes Act](#) (Act) and Regulations came into force on January 1, 2022. The Act and Regulations replaced the *Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* as the legislation which governs construction standards in Saskatchewan. The Act includes new provisions supporting enforcement of plumbing permits, including the ability for a local authority to issue orders.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Code Enforcement Module

The POSSE LMS system is comprised of individual modules to support a variety of different permitting, licensing and enforcement workflows. Internal staff resources, professional services, engagement and marketing resources are required to implement each module.

Administration is requesting \$250,000 in funding for professional services to implement the Code Enforcement Module. The Code Enforcement Module includes workflows required to support the building enforcement process. Building Standards is using the original permit system to manage enforcement and order processes as an interim solution until such time workflows can be added to the POSSE LMS system. At present, Community Standards uses third-party software to manage its enforcement files, which have limited reporting capabilities and no internal IT support. The POSSE LMS Code Enforcement Module will provide improved customer communication and internal coordination and opportunities to streamline administrative work for field staff.

The Code Enforcement module also supports workflows associated with the new plumbing enforcement processes and those associated with bylaw complaints, under the purview of the Community Standards Department, which includes zoning, drainage, right-of-way, sewer use, business licensing, etc.

With the coordination of existing internal resources, all workflows can be implemented, at the same time, in coordination with the vendor, by using the requested additional funding. Upon approval, this phase of the project will begin in fall 2022 and be implemented by the summer of 2023.

Administration sees value in completing all work, at the same time, to create aligned enforcement processes and practices across Building Standards and Community Standards. In addition to aligned practices, it is anticipated the uniform approach will also be a more efficient solution for IT as opposed to implementing a separate system.

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Levels of Staff Support in Planning and Development

Phase 2 of the project includes the development and implementation of the full suite of planning related workflows. Internal subject matter experts are required to support the implementation, which requires staff throughout the Department, over the course of the project. While some of the staffing can be managed with delays to other work program items, the requirement for staff from Development Review to participate in various workflows has the potential to negatively impact the service levels for customers, including delays in processing applications of various types. To prevent these types of delays, Administration is proposing the temporary addition of one position in Development Review, until full implementation of the POSSE LMS system is complete. Further evaluation of staffing needs will occur as implementation progresses to ensure adequate resources are in place to meet expected levels of service. Following implementation of the new LMS system, application fees will be reviewed and adjusted as required to ensure we continue to meet level of service and cost recovery objectives for the program.

The addition of this temporary position is estimated at a cost of \$93,000 and proposed to be funded from the Community Services Capital Reserve.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To fund the additional scope, Administration is recommending \$167,000 from the Plan Review and Inspection Service Stabilization Reserve, \$43,000 from the Business Licensing Stabilization Reserve and \$133,000 from the Community Services Division Capital Reserve, be allocated to the Capital Project. There is sufficient funding in all the reserves to cover these proposed draws.

The funding plan proposed for the capital project adjustments outlined in this report is as follows:

| Funding Source | Approved Budget (\$000) | Additional 2022 Allocation (\$000) |
|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Plan Review and Inspection Service Stabilization Reserve | \$2,245 | \$167 |
| Business Licensing Stabilization Reserve | 250 | 43 |
| Productivity Improvement Loan | 370 | 0 |
| Community Services Division Capital Reserve | 0 | 133 |
| Total | \$2,865 | \$343 |

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Building Standards does not anticipate additional funding for the project to affect building and plumbing permit fee rates approved during the 2022/2023 budget. The cost recovery model is largely dependent on permit volumes and operating expenses. Permit volumes and operating expenses will continue to be monitored to ensure cost recovery and budget forecasts are achieved.

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Community Standards does not anticipate any impact to fees associated with business and taxi-related licensing, sign permits, and sewer-use permits that result from the project funding increase to the 2022/2023 budget.

Planning and Development does not anticipate additional funding for the project to affect the development application fee rates approved during the 2022/2023 budget.

Following full implementation of the POSSE LMS system, a fee review will be undertaken to ensure cost recovery objectives are met in conjunction with the 2024/2025 multi-year budget process.

NEXT STEPS

With direction from Committee and City Council, Administration will negotiate the formal contracts with the vendor and begin implementation in the fall of 2022.

APPENDIX

1. Summary of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Workflows

REPORT APPROVAL

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