

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JUNE 16, 2008

BIZPAL INITIATIVE

Recommendation

The City Manager and the Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services & City Solicitor recommend that Council approve the City of Vaughan entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with Service Ontario for the purpose of implementing the BizPal Initiative.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact associated with implementing the BizPal Initiative.

Communications Plan

The Corporate Communications Department will be requested to prepare a media launch, including press release, once the BizPal application is ready for launch. The application will be promoted through the City's service counters, the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre and its funding partners.

Purpose

To seek Council approval to implement BizPal Initiative.

Background – Analysis and Options

For small and medium-sized enterprises, finding all the permits and licenses they need to start and grow their business is complicated, time consuming and prone to errors and non-compliance. The BizPal Initiative was developed to ease the regulatory burden placed on small businesses and a desire to make government services more client-focused. It is built upon extensive research into the nature and economics of comparable services in other countries and various Canadian jurisdictions. It also reflects input from private sector technology developers.

BizPal has been supported and promoted by the Ontario Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (MSBE), the provincial partner of the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre.

BizPal is a new government on-line business permit and licensing identification system which provides more efficient services to small and medium sized businesses and entrepreneurs, at less costs than traditional service channels while saving time for staff and business clients. From one single point of contact, business owners and entrepreneurs can identify what permits and licenses for their business venture are needed from municipal, regional, provincial and federal governments. BizPal is accessible on a 24/7 basis by internet access. In addition to being convenient, the application allows users to understand specific jurisdictional requirements and therefore promotes awareness and encourages compliance.

The benefits to business owners using BizPal include:

- Comprehensive, customized list of permits and licenses required by all levels of government quickly and easily;
- Reference to the appropriate program delivery agents;
- Leverage web-forms and existing online services;
- Simplifies business start-up and reduces start-up time

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- Facilitates business planning.

The benefits to the City of Vaughan from adopting BizPal include:

- Economic development benefits, i.e. easier for businesses to establish in the City;
- Provides a higher level of customer service;
- Reduce staff time answering enquiries
- Compliance costs and efforts may be substantially reduced;
- May help reduce revenue lost from unintentional non-compliance;
- Provides a complete overview of Vaughan's permit and license regulations;
- Provides an opportunity to harmonize processes between various jurisdictions;
- Consistent permit and license information across all distribution channels, i.e. counter services, telephone and internet.

An initial meeting to demonstrate the website and its benefits was held on Feb 2008. The presentation was delivered by Service Ontario to Economic Development and Licensing staff.

The BizPal Initiative has been initiated in a number of provinces/territories and municipalities, including Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto, Peel Region. York Region Economic Development will also be implementing BizPal shortly. A pamphlet entitled "Are You Open for Business" is attached. Further information is also available on www.bizpal.ca

Upon Council approval to go forward with the BizPal Initiative, staff will develop a project charter, co-ordinate the collection of municipal permit and licensing information, and establish a timeline for a launch. The key implementation steps include:

1. Creating an inventory of permits and licenses
2. Mapping the inventory to confirm to compatible data standards
3. Posting the information to BizPal Administration Module
4. Testing
5. Launch of the BizPal application including media campaign
6. Maintenance and update of data in the Administration Module, as required,

The BizPal Initiative will be implemented at no financial cost to the City of Vaughan. The software was developed and delivered by Industry Canada, Service Ontario and its partners. The BizPal application will be launched from the City's website and carry the City's visual branding. After the initial staff time to inventory and map the permit and license information, there will only be maintenance time, as required. Targeted launch date: Fall 2008.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the priorities set out by Council and specifically it addresses Vaughan Vision 2020 goal: Managing Growth and Economic Vitality.

Regional Implications

Upon approval of this report, the Region of York shall be informed that the City of Vaughan will be participating in BizPal. Co-operation with the Region will be sought to launch a fully-integrated product.

Conclusion

Using the BizPal application, the City of Vaughan, Region of York, Province of Ontario and Government of Canada can offer entrepreneurs and business clients with enhanced and comprehensive service delivery in accessing permit and business license regulations. From the municipal standpoint, BizPal increases regulatory compliance while utilizing staff time more efficiently and generating local competitiveness.

Attachments

“Are You Open for Business” Pamphlet

Report prepared by

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Respectfully submitted,

Michael DeAngelis
City Manager

Janice Atwood-Petkovski
Commissioner of Legal & Administrative
Services & City Solicitor

ARE YOU OPEN FOR BUSINESS?

BizPaL can help you:

- *help businesses start*
- *respond 24/7 to entrepreneurs' needs*
- *encourage better business planning*
- *make it easy for businesses to comply*

**BizPaL—
Business Permits and Licences**

With BizPaL, your community is open for business

Encouraging business development in your community can be a challenge, especially now, as so many governments are finding fiscal restraint a necessity.

With BizPaL — a new Government On-line business permit and licence identification system — as part of your business promotion strategy, you can do more than ever before with less than you'd expect. BizPaL lets you provide better services to small and medium businesses and entrepreneurs, at less cost than traditional service channels — all while saving time for employees and business clients.

In short, with BizPaL, your community is open for business.

Helping governments help business

BizPaL gives you the tools you need to provide better service to businesses and entrepreneurs in your community.

BizPaL is convenient. From a single point of contact, business owners and entrepreneurs can see what permits and licences their businesses will need from your municipal and provincial/territorial governments, and from the federal government.

Governments working together for business



Yukon
Government



ATTACHMENT 1

BizPaL is cost-effective. The on-line system provides a lower-cost delivery channel for permit and licence information than either traditional phone or counter service. It also saves time for employees and entrepreneurs who can self-serve — and time saved translates into money saved.

BizPaL allows you to build on your strengths. It's easy to integrate into your community's current Web site, and allows you to leverage existing Web assets, such as e-forms and on-line directories.

Helping businesses help themselves

For businesses and entrepreneurs, BizPaL saves valuable time and energy by providing a single source for complete information. Within a few minutes, the user can acquire a list of all necessary permits and licences from all levels of government. And since BizPaL is a Web-based system, it's available 24/7 from any Internet access point — which means that permit and licence due diligence is now convenient enough to fit even the most hectic schedule.

BizPaL also encourages better business planning. With outputs tailored to the business in question, the users can see exactly what permits and licences are needed, and take steps to comply with government regulations and requirements — ensuring they get it right the first time.

Easy as 1, 2, 3

Starting a business can be a stressful experience for even the most self-assured entrepreneur. That's why we've made BizPal as easy to use as possible. It's designed to be transparent, and appears as part of your local Web site, so there's no need for users to link to outside resources. It functions intuitively, steering users through a simple, three-step process:

1. Pick your city.
2. Answer questions about your business.
3. Receive a customized list of necessary permits and licences, and instructions on how to obtain them.

With all the legwork done, business owners and entrepreneurs can move forward with their business plans with confidence. What could be easier?

Give your community the BizPal advantage

BizPal makes business development easier, more convenient and more cost-effective. It makes technology work for you, and allows you to lead real change in your community.

Call now to reap the added benefits of being a Pilot Project participant.

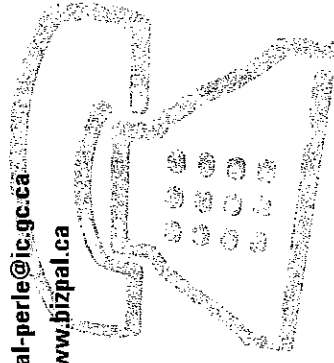
For more information on BizPal, or to reserve a place in line to implement BizPal in your community,

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Internet: www.bizpal.ca



Ontario



Canada