

Report to Council



Date: April 19, 2021
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: UBCM Local Government Program Services for the Local Government Development Approvals Program
Department: Planning and Development Services

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Planning & Development Services Department dated April 19th with respect to the UBCM Local Government Program Services for the Local Government Development Approvals Program;

AND THAT Council directs staff to apply for grant funding for the AI Powered Planning and Development Services project through the UBCM Local Government Program Services for the Local Government Development Approvals Program;

AND THAT Council directs staff to apply for grant funding for the Infill Housing Fast-Track Process Review project through the UBCM Local Government Program Services for the Local Government Development Approvals Program;

AND THAT Council support the current proposed activities and endorse staff to provide overall grant management;

AND THAT, if the grant application is successful, the 2021 Financial Plan be amended to include the receipt of funds.

Purpose:

To seek Council support for a grant application to the Local Government Development Approvals Program.

Background:

In September 2019, the Province of BC published its Development Approvals Process Review report. This report was created through province-wide local government and industry stakeholder consultation. This grant program is in part aimed at helping local governments fund process improvement initiatives that they lacked the financial support/expertise to complete on their own.

Discussion:

AI Powered Planning and Development Services

The City proposes to create and implement a data base driven artificially intelligent software system that will help homebuilders, developers and residents access information pertaining to property development and construction more quickly and efficiently. The goal is to work with external partner Microsoft to build a system that will help answer the following types of questions:

- What can I do on my property today?
- What does the City's Official Community Plan call for on my property in the future?
- Can I add a secondary suite on my property?
- What are the building setbacks for a carriage house?
- Can I have a home-based business?

This system will build on recent business systems improvement work undertaken by the City of Kelowna to facilitate online application submission in the Planning and Building processes.

When implemented, the primary objective is to reduce staff time responding to routine inquiries from realtors, developers, residents and at the same time provide an enhanced, streamlined service. This system will also allow 24/7 response to many different types of inquiries, recognizing that service doesn't start or end during business hours. The resource time savings will then be re-directed back into the development review/approvals process. Kelowna hopes to be able to quantify the benefits through established data collections to demonstrate efficiencies and benefits. If successful, the City will be able to share the model with other BC and Canadian municipalities and show how our already efficient process can be improved even further.

Infill Housing Fast-Track Process Review

The City is also proposing a second project that targets the permitting process itself. Given the amount of infill and missing middle housing Kelowna's new Official Community Plan proposes, a review of the City's infill permitting processes (after adoption of the Official Community Plan) could provide recommended improvements to help speed up the various approval processes that are involved in the review and approval of this type of housing. The City has done some small-scale pilot projects in this area and we plan to include some of those lessons in the review. The goal of the project is primarily more efficient processes for Infill Housing development and the result will be the quicker delivery of infill housing units to the Kelowna market.

Conclusion:

Staff are recommending that Council endorse this grant application. Funding for these projects will help improve the City's development process and speed up housing approvals in the future. In addition, there are many peripheral benefits from both of these projects, including alignment with Imagine Kelowna and OCP focus areas.

Internal Circulation:

Grants and Special Projects Manager
Information Services Director
Financial Services Supervisor

Considerations applicable to this report:***Financial/Budgetary Considerations:*****Considerations not applicable to this report:*****Legal/Statutory Authority:******Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:******Existing Policy:******External Agency/Public Comments:******Communications Comments:***

Submitted by:

R.Smith, Divisional Director of Planning and Development Services

Approved for inclusion:



D.Gilchrist, City Manager