GREATER LANGLEY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

March 2016

PRESENTATION TO CITY & TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY COUNCILS

INTER-MUNICIPAL BUSINESS LICENSES

In the Province of British Columbia there are eleven (11) existing mobile business license agreements and seventy-three (73) participating municipalities. Local governments are reporting increased licensing compliance, reduced administrative burden, reduced business license application processing, improved information flow between local governments, and increased ability to monitor compliance. Residents are benefiting from increased choice and consumer confidence in service providers. Businesses save time and money by purchasing one mobile business license instead of multiple non-resident permits which reduces the administrative burden and allows businesses to operate where their services are needed.

There are currently four (4) similar programs available within the Lower Mainland region with a total of twenty-three (23) participating municipalities. We are advised that other municipalities and First Nations within the region have expressed interest in participating. We are also advised that variances in revenue is essentially neutral, which addresses the significant concerns expressed by the municipalities at the outset of the programs. The Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction advises that the number of business licenses in the Mobile Business Registry is displaying considerable growth in the Lower Mainland over the initial two year pilot period with an increase of one thousand two hundred and fifty-seven (1,257) issued in the year 2015 over 2014.

Twelve chambers and boards of trade, working in partnership with the BC Chamber of Commerce, participated in a joint survey of their members to gauge potential support for an expanded Inter-Municipal Business License (IMBL) program. The survey time period was the first week of February 2016.

Burnaby	New Westminster
Chilliwack	North Vancouver
Cloverdale	Richmond
Greater Langley	Surrey
Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows	Tri-Cities
Mission	Vancouver

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Combined, they represent a membership of 13,105. The survey is a quick snapshot of members' opinions and as such, points to potential trends and actions.

Overall, those responding to the survey are very supportive (over 80%) of expanding the inter-municipal license program due to ease of tracking fewer licences, and a lowered overall cost. Of interest is just over a third responding are in construction or construction related industries; therefore, there is strong support from other business sectors. However, several respondents cautioned that if the fee structure becomes too expensive, it would be onerous on small businesses and would inhibit businesses from expanding their client base.

Two points to highlight from the comments: The number of respondents who were not aware of the current inter-municipal license programs is quite high, over 40%. Somewhat related are comments that indicate a lack of knowledge of whether licenses are required in municipalities other than the "home" city if members are "only visiting clients."

The addition of such a program will provide an opportunity for Lower Mainland businesses to further reduce the burden and confusion of managing multiple business licenses, and encourage increased compliance throughout the entire region. We are recommending including the full region as an additional program to provide an opportunity for mobile businesses to select the program that most suits their needs. They would still have access to the existing programs if their trade area is satisfied by the licenses currently offered in smaller geographic areas.

We have been assured by the Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction that they will continue to provide local governments with research and analysis support to identify the most equitable and practical program, as well as continue to provide a common database and technical support for bylaw enforcement at no cost to communities.

To alleviate any concerns or questions Council may have, we are providing Council with an updated Mobile Business License Local Government Implementation Guide, Fact Sheet & Key Messages and a copy of the survey Summary Report that demonstrates region-wide support for the addition of a region-wide program.

On behalf of the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce I respectfully request that City and Township Council and Staff work with the Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction and municipalities from Hope to West Vancouver to:

1) Implement an additional Regional Inter-Municipal Business License Program for the Lower Mainland B.C. Region.

2) Develop educational and awareness strategies to ensure members are able to take advantage of the opportunities the program provides, and to ensure members are compliant with the various municipalities licensing requirements.

Scott Johnston, President