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DEVELOPMENT TRACKING PILOT PROJECT

The Transportation Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated October 23, 2012, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Community Planning.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Munirom Technologies Inc. be retained to provide a pilot project for the Region using their “AppTrack” development tracking software for the purposes of tracking site plan development applications and related regional development charge payments.
2. Council approve retaining a consultant to provide an independent peer evaluation of the pilot project and, in consultation with the local municipalities, a broader assessment of the full range of municipal development tracking systems with appropriate recommendations.
3. The Commissioner of Transportation Services and Community Planning be authorized to execute contracts with the following, subject to the terms and conditions acceptable to the Commissioner of Transportation Services and Community Planning, and subject to review of the Legal Services department to form and content:
 - a. Munirom Technologies Inc. for the purposes of providing a development tracking pilot project for site plan applications and development charges.
 - b. A consultant for the purposes of a third party independent evaluation of the development tracking pilot project and a broader assessment of the full range of municipal development tracking systems, in consultation with local municipalities.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council authorization to retain consulting services for the purposes of:

- a. Undertaking a Regional pilot project for the purposes of tracking development applications, and more specifically site plans across the Region, along with site plan related development charges.
- b. Undertaking an independent third party evaluation of the development tracking pilot project and a broader evaluation of the Region's development tracking systems in order to provide recommendations, in consultation with local municipalities, on a regional development tracking system.

3. BACKGROUND

The Region's Community Planning Branch is responsible for co-ordinating, reviewing, and approving development applications for Regional interests

The York Region Community Planning Branch is responsible for co-ordinating, reviewing, commenting and providing Regional approval for development applications across the Region. The Branch receives official plan amendments applications, rezoning applications, subdivision and site plan applications, and severance/consent applications, and ensures that applications conform with Regional planning policies and that all requirements have been protected with respect to various Regional interests such as Regional wellheads, property requirements, travel demand management requirements, transit requirements, intersection and access design, road and servicing design, and development implications to the Regional road system.

Development trends are changing in the Region and they are increasingly complex, requiring more co-ordination and collaboration

Development activity in the Region has changed over the last several years, particularly in the southern three municipalities. For example, residential activity is moving away from traditional low-density subdivision to high density development, and commercial and employment uses are often no longer stand-alone, but part of larger mixed-use development blocks. As a result, applications are increasingly complex, requiring more co-ordination with internal Regional departments, external local departments and agencies, and more rigorous tracking of the circulation process to ensure customer service levels can be maintained.

The Region has a number of different development tracking systems that generally work in isolation of each other

Regional staff currently use several development tracking systems to track development applications through the various aspects of the planning process, including Official Plan Amendments, sub-division plans, rezoning, site plan, and severance/consent applications. Some of these existing systems employ dated technologies and they are in need, collectively, of an update in order to better handle current needs and demands.

An unsolicited proposal has been received for a development application tracking pilot project

The Region received an unsolicited proposal on June 28, 2012 from Munirom Technologies Inc. to provide a pilot project for the Region of their “AppTrack” development tracking software.

The “AppTrack” Development Tracking Pilot project includes development application and Development Charge tracking capabilities, as well as integration with the City of Vaughan which also uses “AppTrack”

The pilot project proposed by Munirom Technologies Inc. would allow the Region to test the following capabilities of the “AppTrack” software:

1. The internal tracking of applications received through the Site Plan process;
2. Externally link the Region with the City of Vaughan’s existing system for the purposes of integrating the review process to electronically circulate, track, comment, and approve development approvals in real-time, and for tracking the payment of Development Charges.

The City of Vaughan currently uses Munirom’s AppTrack software for development tracking purposes. However, their system utilizes is an older version of the software and likely would need to have some updating before the external link portion of this pilot project could proceed.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

An updated tracking system would support the Region’s commitment to continuous improvement of service delivery

Through the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan, the Region has committed to continue to manage itself prudently, and to provide Regional services that are increasingly customer friendly. In terms of development review, it is important for the Region to look at ways of adapting its organization, processes and tools to match these objectives, in order to achieve the strategic goals set out above. The pilot project offers the opportunity to enhance the Region’s development tracking review process.

The Community Planning Branch is undergoing organizational and process changes to meet changing industry needs

In 2012, organizational changes were made to the Region’s Transportation and Community Planning Department in response to the Region’s earlier Corporate

reorganization. These changes included moving the Development Approvals section, formerly part of the Roads Branch, to the Community Planning Branch.

The reorganization of the Transportation and Community Planning Department and the consolidation of development review through the “One Window” offers a significant opportunity to enhance development tracking in the Region.

Munirom’s development tracking pilot project provides the opportunity to evaluate an enhanced development tracking system, in conjunction with process changes, without long term commitment

Munirom’s development tracking pilot project gives the Region a unique opportunity to assess an enhanced development tracking system which can be integrated with local municipalities to provide seamless customer service and fiscal tracking capabilities. The fact that the City of Vaughan has purchased and applied “AppTrack” provides an opportunity to test the “AppTrack” system and our local and Regional business processes under the pilot.

This new software can be evaluated in conjunction with ongoing process reviews to see how it could complement, or augment, the tracking of applications and development charges and link to external processes to improve efficiencies, not only for Regional staff, but also the local municipalities and customers.

The final terms and conditions of the proposal, including the scope, start date and duration of the project, will be finalized by the Commissioner of Transportation and Community Planning before retaining the services of Munirom Technologies Inc.. However, there is an understanding that undertaking this pilot does not in any way commit Region to purchase the “AppTrack” software, or continue to use the services of Munirom Technologies Inc.

There is a need for an independent third party evaluation to ensure the process is transparent, and to make recommendations regarding how the Region should accommodate future demands

It is recommended that a consultant be retained for an independent third party evaluation of this pilot project, and a broader evaluation of the development tracking needs of the Region. This third party reviewer would serve to:

1. Provide an unbiased assessment of the AppTrack software, and the services provided by Munirom Technologies Inc., and would keep the process transparent avoiding any conflicts in the future should the Region choose to acquire these services; and
2. Allow the Region to have their existing software systems evaluated and compared against the new software systems, to determine whether the existing systems can accommodate future demands, can be modified or complemented with new software

to accommodate future demands, or would need to be replaced, in consultation with local municipalities.

Link to Key Council-approved Plans

The acquisition of Development Application and Development Charge tracking software is consistent with the Region's 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan in terms of Making the Region's Services More User Friendly by streamlining the local and Regional review processes through a potential one-window approach and providing more efficiency through the electronic circulation of data, applications, responses and approvals.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The direct and indirect costs to implement this pilot project are estimated to be:

- Cost of Pilot Project: \$50,000 - \$75,000
- Independent third party evaluation: \$50,000 - \$75,000

Funds for this project have been allocated in the draft 2013 – 2014 Business Plan and Budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The overall assessment of the Region's development tracking system offers an opportunity to work in partnership with local municipalities to identify needs and streamline processes on both sides.

Furthermore, the implementation of this pilot project and the required improvements to Vaughan development tracking system provides an immediate opportunity to work with the City of Vaughan to improve, streamline and expedite their development review process, which is consistent with the recommendations made by staff to Vaughan Council in September of this year.

7. CONCLUSION

The Region's Transportation and Community Planning Department is committed to improvement of customer service and service delivery with respect to the review of development applications. In line with this commitment are recent organizational and process changes within the Department, including transferring the Development Approvals section from the Roads Branch to the Community Planning Branch to move

toward a development system. The Community Planning Branch employs a number of different software applications for the purposes of tracking development applications.

Munirom Technologies Inc. has approached the Region with an unsolicited proposal to undertake a development tracking pilot project. This project provides the opportunity for the Region to test the capabilities of their “AppTrack” software, with respect to the tracking of site plan applications and collection of development charges, without any commitment to future software application purchases or acquisition of consulting services. The pilot would also provide a unique opportunity for the Region to evaluate how the Region’s internal site plan review process can be linked externally and integrated with the City of Vaughan’s “AppTrack” system.

The evaluation of this pilot project should be combined with the need for an independent assessment of the Region’s future development tracking needs.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the Region retain the services of Munirom Technologies Inc. to undertake the development tracking pilot project and an independent consultant be retained to evaluate this pilot project along with the Region’s broader need for a comprehensive development tracking system.

For more information on this report, please contact Heather Konefat, Director, Community Planning at Ext.1502.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.