

Restaurant and Brewery Industry Business Experience Improvement Program Update

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Business Advisory Committee receive this Report for the Corporate Record.

HIGHLIGHTS

- In response to the 2020 *What We Heard Report – Restaurant and Brewery Industry* led by the Business Advisory Committee working group, The City has taken actions to enable restaurants and breweries to be open for business, quickly.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? The City focused on enhancing its services for restaurants and breweries, to provide them with consistency and predictability for service, and reduced permitting and licensing timelines.
- This matters to Calgarians because The City has made it faster and easier for restaurants and breweries to open and grow their business.
- The solutions implemented for restaurants and breweries will gradually expand to support the entire business community in Calgary.
- The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) directed Administration to return to BAC no later than Q2 2022 to provide a full progress update on all the action items outlined in BAC2021-0195.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A prosperous city
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

The City's goal is to make it fast and easy for entrepreneurs to open and grow their business. Administration is committed to providing ongoing improvements to the business approvals service by providing businesses with:

- Fast and predictable timelines that are measured and monitored with clear metrics.
- Customer service that is knowledgeable, prompt, and tailored to business types, with sufficient information that is always available and accessible.
- Demonstrated value of a business licence.

In response to the *What We Heard Report – Restaurants and Brewery Industry* from report BAC2020-1312, the Business Experience Improvement Program was created with the following work streams:

- Customer experience – focusing on the relationship between business customers and The City, and the availability of resources to help customers open and grow their business.
- Education and training – focusing on clearly communicating, externally and internally, relevant information that is required for a business customer to be successful in their journey, and for staff to deliver a consistent service.
- Service improvements – focusing on process improvements, adding certainty, and reducing the associated time and costs.
- Business licence – focusing on articulating the value of a business licence and the opportunities to modernize the service.

A suite of improvements has been implemented for the restaurant and brewery industry, and the solutions will gradually expand to support the entire business community in Calgary. The service has already expanded to support distilleries and urban agriculture. Please find detailed below, the improvements accomplished to date.

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Customer experience

- Completed the 2021 Business Experience Representative pilot successfully and adopted the service as a normal business practice. The scope of the Business Experience Representative's work is to:
 - provide the customer with consistent support throughout their entire journey to open a business.
 - guide customers through the permit and licence processes; provide advice to customers, and connect them to, and act as a conduit with, subject matter experts on the approvals required for their business, whether within The City of Calgary or another jurisdiction (eg. provincial).
 - help reduce approvals timelines for customers.
- Formed a multi-discipline team of business-oriented contacts in the various approval areas, resulting in customer service efficiencies, and coordination of permit approvals and inspections.

Education and training

- Redesigned the restaurant and breweries business licensing website, making it clear and easy for citizens to follow the journey for opening a restaurant or brewery, plus other useful information.
- Implemented a Building Permit Completeness Review to accelerate the approvals process. This review informs applicants of the minimum requirements for a complete application and reduces the number of resubmissions.
- Implemented a courtesy HVAC inspection service for restaurants and breweries before the permit and licence journey proceeds, where an inspector will visit the site to advise the customer on HVAC requirements, to get approvals and inspections completed quickly.
- Launched several awareness and marketing campaigns, including media blitzes, and public webinars on how to open a restaurant or brewery, and on outdoor patios.
- Partnered with a community economic development organization to provide seminars on how to open a business.

Service improvements

- Adapted existing technology to improve service delivery for customers, such as:
 - enabling customers to submit permit applications online with the ability to view the development permit status online.
 - enabling video inspections.
 - enabling customers to book and manage their inspection schedules with a secure online tool.
 - issuing building permits automatically when all application deficiencies are resolved, eliminating the need for staff to manually check-up on the applications.
 - issuing business licences digitally.
- Launched a call quality monitoring program in the planning services call centre to ensure consistent and quality customer service.
- Adopted a streamlined and expedited development permit process for outdoor patios, first implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, as an ongoing business practice, and for 2022, through Council's approval of report IP2022-0398 *2022 Seasonal Patio Program and Mobility Network Accessibility*, waived the development permit and public land use fees.
- Continued the Centre City Enterprise Area to exempt the need for certain development permits.

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- Implemented a coordination team for Waste Management Facility applications to better manage the location of waste facilities, reducing the impact of Provincial setback restrictions for restaurants, breweries, and other food services in or near industrial areas. Upcoming amendments to the industrial districts of the Land Use Bylaw will more precisely identify uses that process or store waste, allowing The City to ensure that food services are not unnecessarily or unintentionally excluded from operating within industrial areas.
- Consolidated land use categories by moving some uses from discretionary to permitted process streams, and simplified definitions for Restaurant uses in the Land Use Bylaw as per Council's approval of report PUD2021-0649 *Land Use Bylaw Amendments to Support Business and Economic Recovery*. This has reduced the number of development permits required. Further improvement on the Change of Use customer journey is currently under detailed investigation and analysis.

Value of a business licence

A business licence is a valuable tool that provides:

1. assurance to citizens and visitors that businesses in Calgary meet important standards such as building safety, health, and community impact considerations;
2. businesses with confirmation for their customers that they meet the standards;
3. enforcement service for non-compliant businesses;
4. value-added business services such as the Business Experience Representatives; and
5. education and communications services.

Some businesses, like restaurants and breweries, need time to meet the important standards which may influence how their space is built to ensure patrons' wellbeing. The City helps businesses navigate through the approvals milestones from beginning to end. Once all approvals are in place, the issuance of the business licence is fast and simple.

Administration reported to the Financial Task Force in July 2021, to quantify the cost and value of service for Business Licensing, and to outline opportunities to modernize the service. The recommendations from that Financial Task Force report that have, and will continue to be part of ongoing improvements for businesses are:

- Communicate the value of licensing to citizens and businesses to increase awareness of service benefits and promote business compliance.
- Consistently improve the customer experience with licence application and renewal processes to increase internal efficiencies and help maintain positive customer service satisfaction rates.
- Promote access to business licensing data and statistics to support businesses and citizens seeking to make informed decisions based on relevant information and emerging trends.
- Enhance methods to measure and share service delivery success to validate those programs and initiatives are effective and impactful.
- Evaluate Administration's capacity to conduct a targeted review of business licensing bylaw(s).

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed

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- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

Several awareness and marketing campaigns were launched, including media blitzes, and public webinars on how to open a restaurant or brewery, and on outdoor patios. The Business Experience Representative service was communicated to the public through a news release on 2022 May 9, and an advertising campaign highlighting the service will run from May to July 2022, and then again from September to November 2022.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Remaining responsive to the needs of the business community is a critical social consideration.

Environmental

There are no environmental implications anticipated.

Economic

Healthy businesses are the foundation of a thriving economy.

Service and Financial Implications

Self-supported funding

Operating budget to support ongoing improvements for businesses.

RISK

It is important to identify opportunities to improve the business journey to open and manage a business in Calgary.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Previous Council Direction and Background
2. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Stuart Dalglish	Planning & Development Services	Approve
Chris Arthurs	People, Innovation & Collaboration Services	Approve