



Subject: Planning Services Consultant and Delegated Authority

Report to: Thorold City Council

Recommendations

1. That Council **APPROVE** the procurement of temporary planning services from external planning consultants until such time as the Planning Division is fully staffed.
2. That Council **APPROVE** amendment to Schedule "A" of Policy No. 100-28 'Delegation of Powers and Duties of Council', as attached in Appendix 1 of this report, to delegate signing authority to Director's for executing contracts and service agreements with consultants for budgeted services normally performed by staff when staffing shortages exist.
3. That Council **APPROVE** amendments to Schedule "A" of Policy No. 100-28 'Delegation of Powers and Duties of Council', as attached in Appendix 1 of this report, to reflect legislated changes under the Planning Act and changes to staff positions.

Key Facts

- 50% of positions within the Planning Division are currently vacant
- Planning services by a consultant is recommended on a temporary basis to maintain service delivery
- Delegated signing authority of contracts and service agreements to directors for temporary help of budgeted services during staffing shortages is recommended
- Staff shall report back to Council should the cost of temporary help be anticipated to have a budgetary impact

Budgetary Status

There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

Analysis

Urban planners are educated and experienced professionals. Planners understand the impacts that land uses and built form have on economic functions, environmental

sustainability/adaptation, and social well-being within a city. Using their specialized knowledge on the development and design of land uses and the built environment, municipal planners recommend policies to city council that will guide all future development within the municipality. Additionally, planners review most development proposals for conformity with the provincial and municipal land use policies in effect.

The City of Thorold's Planning Division currently has several vacant positions, equal to 50% of the division, which have proven to be difficult to fill with qualified and experienced individuals. In efforts to mitigate interruptions to service delivery, it is recommended that the City of Thorold temporarily out-source some municipal planning services, as determined by the Director of Development Services or designate, to a professional planning consultant until such time as staffing levels are achieved within the Planning Division to maintain service delivery. The City of Thorold has successfully outsourced various planning services to external consultants in the past allowing for continued service delivery and development within the municipality. This has proven to be a viable temporary solution to maintain development services.

Furthermore, it is recommended that Council amend Policy No. 100-28 'Delegation of Powers and Duties of Council', as highlighted in Appendix 1 to this report, to delegate signing authority to Director's for executing contracts or service agreements with consultants for budgeted services normally performed by staff when staffing shortages exist and to reflect legislated changes to the Planning Act and changes to position titles within the corporation. This delegated authority will allow for corporate efficiencies and continued service delivery during time sensitive situations such as staffing shortages. Similar delegated authority exists to the Director of Development Services, as the Chief Building Official, for services rendered by a Registered Code Agency as well as to Directors for the purchase of budgeted goods or services not exceeding \$5,000.

The City of Thorold's Procurement/Purchasing Policy exempts the procurement of temporary help from the purchasing procedures of the policy where the application is impractical. Due to the time sensitivity of maintaining service delivery during staffing shortages, the regular procurement process is impractical. Additionally, the cost of external planning consultants is expected to be funded through development application fees and savings realized by vacant positions. Should the costs of these services begin to reach a point that may impact the budget, a subsequent report will be brought before council for consideration.

Impact on the Environment, Climate Change

There are no known environmental or climate change related impacts to this Report.

Alternatives Reviewed

None

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- Vibrant and Prosperous Community
 - Livable Community
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Community Wellbeing
- Service Delivery Excellence
 - Human Resources
- Sustainability
 - Sustainable Infrastructure
 - Environmental Sustainability

Other Pertinent Reports

N/A

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Policy No. 100-28 Delegation of Powers and Duties of Council with recommended revisions