

Audit Committee Report

DATE: Monday, November 22, 2021

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: BUILDING STANDARDS AUDIT: PHASE 1

FROM:

Kevin Shapiro, Director of Internal Audit

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To communicate the findings from the Building Standards Audit: Phase 1.

Report Highlights

- The mission of the Building Standards Department is to ensure the safe and lawful use of lands and buildings through the administration of the Building Code Act, enforcement of the Ontario Building Code regulations, Zoning By-law requirements, and applicable laws.
- While the department has made significant progress on several initiatives over the past number of years, opportunities were identified to improve management oversight and ensure risks related to the business administration, building permits issuance and other zoning services processes are efficiently and effectively mitigated.
- Management has developed action plans which will mitigate the identified risks and address the recommendations outlined in the report.
- Internal Audit will follow up with management and report on the status of management action plans at a future committee meeting.

Recommendations

1. That the Internal Audit Report – Building Standards: Phase 1 be received.

Background

Based on the variety and depth of the programs and activities that Building Standards is responsible, we will be conducting this project in phases. We will start by reviewing the Business Administration, Permit Issuance and other Zoning Services related processes (Phase 1), followed by the Inspection and Compliance Processes (Phase 2).

The objective of Phase 1 is to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal controls, processes and procedures in place to mitigate the business risks associated with the management and administration of the Business Administration, Permit Issuance and other Zoning Services Related Processes.

The audit approach included a review of the strategic goals, objectives and oversight of the business unit, review of relevant programs, legislation, policies and procedures, use of technology, and interviews with staff and management.

The audit scope included department related activities that occurred in January 2019 to November 2020.

Previous Reports/Authority

Not applicable.

Analysis and Options

The mission of the Building Standards Department (BSD) is to ensure the safe and lawful use of lands and buildings through the administration of the Building Code Act (BCA), enforcement of the Ontario Building Code (OBC) regulations, Zoning By-law (ZBL) requirements, as well as applicable law. BSD enforces OBC regulations including health and life safety standards, building by-law requirements, and zoning regulations. BSD realizes this mission through four core business units: Zoning Services, Customer Services and Administration, Technical Services and Inspection Services.

Zoning Services is responsible for the interpretation and administration of the City of Vaughan's Zoning By-law. The division provides written and verbal confirmation of zoning to the public, internal and external agencies, and compliance letters and consents to the transfer of land. The Zoning Services manager also oversees Customer Services and Administration, which is responsible for General Administration, including monetary requirements, public inquiries, sign permits, public education and facilitating inter-departmental interface with other departments. Zoning and Technical Services administer the Building Permit issuance process, ensuring construction activity is in compliance with OBC and ZBL requirements and associated standards, within the legislated turnaround times. These business units facilitate city development through pre-permit consultations, inter-departmental coordination for complex, high profile and corporate projects through conditional permits, partial approvals and alternative solutions.

Financial Impact

There are no direct economic impacts associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Not applicable.

Conclusion

While the department has made significant progress on several initiatives over the past number of years, opportunities were identified to improve management oversight and ensure risks related to the building permits issuance and other zoning services processes are efficiently and effectively. The following opportunities were identified:

- Improve the oversight over certain key processes including Request for Information, Conditional Permit Application, Sign Permit and the Zoning By-law Review Committee.
- Improve overall governance and oversight of the department.
- Leverage advances in technology to improve business processes and controls.
- Establish and monitor Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure department performance.

For more information, please contact: Kevin Shapiro, Director of Internal Audit, ext. 8293

Attachments

1. Internal Audit Report – Building Standards: Phase 1
2. Presentation Materials

Prepared by

Kevin Shapiro, Director of Internal Audit, ext. 8293

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KS' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Kevin Shapiro, Director of Internal Audit