



APPENDIX D – RFP PARTICULARS

A. THE DELIVERABLES

Background:

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo's Planning & Development Department (P&D) is undertaking a business process improvement project to enhance and streamline how it delivers exceptional customer service while maintaining its mandated regulatory function.

P&D is comprised of three branches - *Safety Codes* (SC), *Community Development Planning* (CDP), and *Land Administration* (LA). Each branch provides different public-facing services¹ and while P&D processes thousands of permits and inspections annually, the department is aware of real and perceived public/investor complaints concerning confusion, inefficiencies and miscommunication which must be addressed. There is the concern that a regulatory environment that is unnecessarily difficult can deter investment, hiring, and hinder economic growth. This review will focus on the processes for all P&D branches independently and how they interact with other municipal groups, including each other, and the public.

CDP's most visible role is processing development permits, business licenses and subdivision applications. The branch also undertakes projects that inform and guide our region's growth, including the Municipal Development Plan, Area Structure Plans, Land Use Bylaw, and Municipal Census. Certain aspects of CDP's role are outlined by and subject to Provincial regulations and processes found in legislation like the *Municipal Government Act*. This Branch is nearing the completion of a new Land Use Bylaw and it is anticipated that the changes will require updated processes and procedures. The process improvement project will build off the work being done internally for the new Land Use Bylaw.

SC ensures safe and compliant work that satisfies the requirements set out in the provincially legislated *Alberta Safety Codes Act* through issuing and closing work permits and inspection services for construction within the RMWB. Safety Codes Officers monitor and identify any non-permitted sites, identify unsafe work conditions, and ensure permits are obtained and compliance is achieved.

LA oversees all aspects of acquiring, disposing and leasing of municipal land and facilities in accordance with Alberta's *Municipal Government Act*. In addition to the Provincial Land Use Framework, Land Administration is also guided by Federal Government requirements and processes.



Project Purpose

As with many government regulatory functions, processes are often seen as “getting in the way” and are perceived by the end-user to add little value. By having efficient, intuitive, processes and clearly communicating the requirements and expectations to staff and the public, P&D aims to reduce red tape and better facilitate property improvement, investment, and responsible growth in our region.

Along with this, P&D believes that a renewed focus on customer service for our residents, businesses, and investors will help address negative perceptions. This project should result in outcomes such as:

- Increased overall client satisfaction and experience by reducing frustration.
- Clearer communication and expectations at the beginning of the process.
- Reduced processes/steps and decrease completion times.
- Enhanced perceptions about development and investment in the region and increased investor confidence.

Deliverables

P&D is seeking a rigorous, systematic, objective, impartial and expert-based evaluation of its processes. Stakeholder engagement is a key component to this project and must be evident throughout all phases of work.

This project must be broken down into distinct phases of work with summary reports describing the steps that were undertaken and the results/findings. Each report must be approved by the Project Manager. While the successful consultant is responsible to recommend a streamlined updated process, P&D anticipates the following work:

1. Map the current processes

- Identify and review all formal and informal processes from the online and in-person perspective and will include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Reviewing all online information/processes and application forms via RMWB.ca and E-Permitting.
 - ii. Reviewing all check lists, brochures shared in person or online.
 - iii. Interviewing staff to ensure that all processes are being identified along with what messages are shared with the applicant.
- Interview external stakeholders to understand how they view the current processes.
- Map and describe how existing P&D processes interact with each other along with other departments.
- Create a process flow or visual map to identify all current steps and processes to see system as a whole.
- Review existing internal P&D processes and staff training documents.
- Review communications tactics utilized to share information regarding the current processes.
- Review work plans being undertaken by staff regarding the implementation of existing and new processes.



2. Analysis

- Based on the mapping in Step 1, assess effectiveness of existing processes and identify challenges and their root causes (e.g. gaps, redundancy, bottlenecks, miscommunication, delays, number and type of permits required, type of information required of applicant). A root cause analysis method may be required.
- Determine the best practices in municipal planning, development and real estate/land practices that are relevant to the RMWB (minimum of five cities in Alberta and two-to-three outside of Alberta of similar nature to be reviewed and approved by RMWB). This must include customer experience, user-friendliness and communication.
- Engage with internal and external stakeholders to understand and substantiate their perspectives on P&D's processes. This will include organizations, businesses and the general public. This step may involve working with current and previous applicants to understand their experiences from beginning to end.
- Assess existing communication mediums (e.g., departmental website, E-permitting, printed brochures, pamphlets, office posters, in-person communication, telephone directory) and identify gaps, inconsistencies, and general issues.

3. Re-design and Map the Updated Processes

- Document and map updated/new processes that are user-friendly, complete, consistent, and cohesive. Coordinate with staff and stakeholders during this process. Focus on process flow – How long will it take for the applicant to carry out each process? Do all processes work together? Is it easier and quicker for applicants? Is it the most efficient way holistically? Does it make sense?
- Ensure that all regulatory requirements such as the Municipal Government Act, Safety Codes Act of Alberta, and applicable Federal Government acts are adhered to.
- Identify changes between the updated and old processes.
- Work with staff to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (including customer service) that acts as a reference tool for staff. This will include engaging the RMWB's PULSE Supervisor to ensure customer services values across the RMWB are consistent and ensuring that desktop procedures are consistent with organizational records and information management practices.
- Provide recommendations to existing software (e.g. Accela) and identify opportunities to integrate all existing P&D processes into one system. This may include engaging other RMWB staff such as the Web Supervisor and assess
- Recommend new avenues/procedures which may encourage development (e.g. use of surety bonds vs. upfront cash securities).

4. Implementation

- Work with staff and guide the implementation of the updated process to ensure this is an action-oriented project. Implementation could occur at all stages of the project, not necessarily at the end. P&D is open to suggestions on how best to approach this.



- Create a step-by-step Implementation Plan that identifies “quick wins” and concurrent processes, required resources and timelines.

5. Communication with internal and external stakeholders

- Recommendations and tools for how the RMWB can effectively educate businesses and residents on the updated process(es).
- Work with RMWB Communications and Engagement (in alignment with their new strategic communications plan) to reformat and re-design all materials/methods that clearly outline the process(es) and ensure a high level of customer service and consistent terminology throughout. These may include:
 - Check lists
 - Brochures
 - Process maps including an overarching “you are here” mall map and individual maps for each process
 - Posters
 - Videos
 - Website info
 - E-permitting portal (Accela)
 - Information packages
 - In-person communication (is accurate information being shared consistently by P&D staff?)
 - Telephone communication (what phone numbers are shared online/PULSE/checklists, what do voicemails say, are people being referred to correct staff)
- Prepare training session(s) for P&D staff to ensure consistency, clarity, complete understanding, and the key messages to be shared with applicants are understood.
- Provide training for stakeholders on updated process.

6. Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

- Create an ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement plan that ensures the department is adaptable. Once improvements are made to the process, it is imperative to ensure staff are following these new processes and given the opportunity to identify what is and isn’t working.
- Identify a mechanism for applicants to share anonymous feedback.

External Communication Requirements

A key component of this work includes engaging external stakeholders regularly throughout the process. The successful consultant and P&D Staff will meet monthly with the Development Advisory Committee and, separately, a collective of key business-related stakeholders (e.g. Fort McMurray Construction Association, Chamber of Commerce, NAABA) for information purposes and, when required, to seek specific input into the process.