INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Planning Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 13, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Growth Management and Planning Divisions – AMANDA Staff and Program Enhancement (PED14035) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Information:

This report is to provide additional information to the 2014 enhancement proposal for one Project Manager to oversee the implementation and conversion to the AMANDA System in the Growth Management and Planning Divisions. The Project Manager would be responsible for developing an implementation roadmap across Divisions, and to program necessary batch routine to support Divisional needs.

AMANDA is a commercial software product that enables business processes to be automated including tracking and monitoring of application progress. AMANDA can be fully integrated to provide a public portal allowing businesses and citizens to safely and securely apply for, submit, track, manage and pay for applications on-line. In addition, AMANDA can be extended to allow third party access. For example, the Conservation Authority (CA) would be permitted to submit conditions for a proposed land use application directly into the electronic folder set up in the AMANDA System. All other approval agencies and internal City Departments would be notified of the status, keeping them in sync with ongoing development for this application. Once the condition is satisfied, the CA would submit a required clearance through the AMANDA System, bringing closure to the outstanding condition.

Within the Planning and Economic Development (PED) Department, only the Parking and By-law Services and Building Services Divisions are currently using AMANDA. Building Services Division has been using AMANDA since 1997 for tracking and issuing building permits, monitoring complaints, and enforcement compliance. The Parking and By-law Services Division uses AMANDA for similar application as the Building Services Division, as well as issuing licences. This information (data) is recorded in AMANDA by address which allows for quick access should the history for a given property be required. Both the Growth Management and Planning Divisions are intending to migrate to the AMANDA System as soon as resources allow, as there are many Corporate benefits such as monitoring of applications to meet prescribed timelines, sharing electronic files, comprehensive records management for inquires and complaints, along with tracking of all development activities. With the full integration of AMANDA, supervisors can monitor staff time through the various development processes and move resources accordingly to meet the demand. Ultimately this information will be used to accurately determine the related cost to provide the service and enhance the delivery model. However, there are no staff or financial resources at this time within the Growth Management and Planning Divisions to assist in the migration to the AMANDA System.

The original plan was that technical and process support would be provided by the Parking and By-law Services and/or the Building Services Divisions. However, with the added workload pressures in both of these areas, it is now apparent that neither Division can provide adequate assistance based on their current backlog. In fact, the increase in enforcement activity and updates to the database to support operational process changes in the Parking and By-law Services Division has placed a huge demand on the AMANDA System, such that the System is no longer effectively supporting their own service delivery. Therefore it is essential that a permanent staff resource of one full-time equivalent (FTE) with the necessary technical abilities to manage this critical project be approved to support operation and maintenance of the AMANDA System in the Growth Management and Planning Divisions. The implementation of AMANDA was a major focus as a part of the Open for Business Sub-Committee discussions on using technology to enhance customer service and more efficient data collection.

The Growth Management and Planning Divisions currently use Microsoft Access to manage data related to applications. This software is not parcel based and, therefore, has limited capabilities for our current work functions, whereas the AMANDA System is parcel based and is only limited by software option purchased and the operators programing capabilities. It became abundantly clear through the work completed for the Open for Business Sub-Committee that a uniform system for the entire Department was required to meet the core objective to provide better service to the business community.

CSDC Systems Inc. is the software provider that has been retained to facilitate the transition from the Access Data Base to AMANDA. In addition, this company will provide the end user training for AMANDA as part of the initial start-up. It is important

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that we have in-house technical support to work jointly with CSDC Systems Inc. during the initial stages. The in-house technical support will be required to complete implementation and the necessary batch routine development to support our Divisional needs. Without this additional technical staff in the Growth Management and Planning Divisions work will fall further behind in meeting the Open for Business objectives. Staff will continue to manually conduct paper searches through files to determine projects status, letter of credit reductions, and follow-up on outstanding agency submissions. Automating the simplest of the development processes will reduce the amount staff time required to complete these essential tasks making Growth Management and Planning Divisions more effective and efficient.

The additional staff will only address the immediate pressures within the Growth Management and Planning Divisions. A Departmental governance model is being looked at to address centralizing the AMANDA related support requirements and current system deficiencies that need to be resolved.

Trying to implement the AMANDA System without the appropriate resources would negatively impede the Growth Management and Planning Divisions to fully realize benefits of the tools available, in a timely manner, and staff would be reliant on current resources that are non-existent.

The proposed enhancement proposal for one Project Manager to oversee the implementation and conversion to the AMANDA System will result in a net levy impact of $115,000.

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