



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Finance Committee

Date: March 20, 2006

From: Jerry Chong
Acting Director of Finance

File:

Re: New Layout of the 2006 Home Owner Grant Application Form

Staff Recommendation

That the report outlining the new 2006 Home Owner Grant application form be received for information

Jerry Chong
Acting Director of Finance
(4064)

Att. 2

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

At the request of the Chair of the Finance Committee, staff reviewed the design of the existing Home Owner Grant (HOG) application in order to move to a more user friendly layout with the objective of minimizing the possibility of taxpayers not properly filling in the grant.

Analysis

Each year, City Council and staff receive numerous complaints about the Home Owner Grant application form from taxpayers who have missed claiming their grant. In the past, the grant application was on the back of the form and the general complaint was that they did not realize there was a form on the back. Those who knew of the grant often complained that the grant was printed too light and was too difficult to read. This was a legitimate argument, as the City was required by the bank to use a lighter shade on the back of any payment stub to ensure that bank stamps and markings were visible.

To address these issues, the HOG form was changed in 2000. The grant application was moved from the back to the front of the payment stub. This change was an improvement in that the taxpayer no longer needed to search for the grant application and that there was no bank restriction on the shade of the printing.

However, in order to accommodate the amount of information on the front of the payment stub, overall print size had to be reduced. This created concern amongst seniors who complained that they did not fill in the application form correctly due to that fact that they could not clearly read the wording.

Staff confirmed with Home Owner Grant Administration that the wording of the grant cannot be altered. After surveying over 20 municipalities in BC, it was discovered that it is possible to leave the wording intact but have the parts of the application form split between the front and the back of the stub. An example of the layout is in Appendix I.

This layout concentrates the important sections of the grant that applies to 95% of the taxpayers onto the front of the stub. This allows for larger font sizes for the key information required in order for a home owner to receive their grant. The section shifted to the back is the information necessary for the 5% of property owners under 65 years of age receiving a senior grant due to qualifying situations.

Financial Impact

No financial impact.

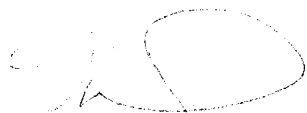
Conclusion

It is important to bear in mind that though the changes will address some of the taxpayers' concerns, it will not take away the problem of simple oversight. While this new form will be

March 20, 2006

- 3 -

more user friendly, staff is cognisant of the fact that many taxpayers who complete the form from memory due to language or other limitations may have difficulty with the new layout.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ivy Wong', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Ivy Wong, CMA
Revenue Manager
(4046)

IW:iw

REVISED HOG APPLICATION

FRONT OF FORM

Due Date: July 4, 2006

HOME OWNER GRANT APPLICATION

I, _____
PRINT NAME IN FULL

have read and understand the Home Owner Grant
Eligibility requirements on the reverse and certify that I
qualify for:

Please check one only:

- ☐ BASIC GRANT – under 65
- ☐ SENIOR GRANT (age 65 or over during this calendar
year) MY BIRTH DATE IS:

YEAR MONTH DAY

I understand that I may be required to provide additional
information to be eligible for a grant. I also understand that
the Home Owner Grant Administration Branch may confirm
my age and address with ICBC.

Sign
Here

OWNER'S SIGNATURE
(Or Spouse/Relative of Deceased Owner)

ADDRESS OF RESIDENCE

PHONE NO: _____

DATE: _____

IT IS AN OFFENCE (SUBJECT TO A PENALTY OF UP
TO \$10,000) TO MAKE A FALSE APPLICATION FOR A
HOME OWNER GRANT

BACK OF FORM (In Lighter Shading)

HOME OWNER GRANT ELIGIBILITY

CITY OF RICHMOND
6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

1. (a) I am an owner (or I am a spouse/relative of the deceased owner) of the property identified on this application form ("this Property") that is assessed and taxed for the current year;
 - (b) I am a permanent resident of British Columbia and I occupy as my principal residence the whole or part of the building(s) located on this Property;
 - (c) Neither I nor my spouse nor the deceased owner have applied for or received a Home Owner Grant on this Property or any other property in the Province during this calendar year, and to the best of my knowledge, no other person has received a Home Owner Grant on this Property during this calendar year.
2. I am eligible for the additional grant for a reason which follows: (Please Select One)
- ☐ (a) I am or will be 65 or over during this calendar year, date of birth being _____ or
- ☐ (b) I am in receipt of, am the spouse of a person who is in receipt of, or am the spouse of a deceased person who was, on the date of death, in receipt of an allowance under the *War Veteran Allowance Act* (Canada) or the *Civilian War-related Benefits* (Canada), or
- ☐ (c) I am designated as a person with disabilities, and receiving disability assistance, hardship assistance or a supplement, under the *BC Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, or
- ☐ (d) I am a person with disabilities, or am the spouse or relative of a person with disabilities, and the person with disabilities resides with me, and I have provide the collector with the required Form B certificate, or
- ☐ (e) I am the spouse or relative of an owner who passed away in the current year who would have been eligible under paragraph (a), (b), (c), or (d) and I occupied the eligible residence as my principal residence on the date of that owner's death.

FOR
BANK
USE
ONLY

CURRENT HOG APPLICATION

FRONT OF FORM

APPLICATION FOR HOME OWNER GRANT

Due Date: July 4, 2005

Payable at most financial institutions in Canada

The information on this form is collected under the authority of the *Home Owner Grant Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 194. The information provided will be used to process your Home Owner Grant claim. If you have any privacy concerns about how this information is used, contact the Home Owner Grant Administration Branch at 250-356-8904 of the Ministry of Provincial Revenue (the "Branch").

1. I, _____, certify the following:
(print name in full)

- (a) I am an owner (or I am a spouse/relative of the deceased owner) of the property identified on this application form ("this property") that is assessed and taxed for the current year;
- (b) I am a permanent resident of British Columbia and I occupy as my principal residence the whole or part of the building(s) located on this property;
- (c) Neither I nor my spouse nor the deceased owner have applied for or received a home owner grant on this Property or any other property in the Province during this calendar year and, to the best of my knowledge, no other person has received a home owner grant on the Property during this calendar year.

Signature →	_____
Address →	_____
Telephone →	_____
Date →	_____ 20 _____

2. I am eligible for the additional grant for a reason which follows:

- ☐ (a) I am or will be 65 or over during this calendar year, date of birth being _____
BIRTH YEAR MONTH DAY
- ☐ (b) I am in receipt of, am the spouse of a person who is in receipt of, or am the spouse of a deceased person who was, on the date of death, in receipt of an allowance under the *War Veteran Allowance Act* (Canada) or the *Civilian War-related Benefits Act* (Canada) or
- ☐ (c) I am designated as a person with disabilities, and receiving disability assistance, hardship assistance or a supplement, under the *BC Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, or
- ☐ (d) I am a person with disabilities, or am the spouse or relative of a person with disabilities, and the person with disabilities resides with me, and I have provided the collector with the required Form B certificate; or
- ☐ (e) I am the spouse or relative of an owner who passed away in the current year who would have been eligible under paragraph (a), (b), (c), or (d) and I occupied the eligible residence as my principal residence on the date of that owner's death

3. I understand that the collector, and/or the Branch may require any documentation necessary to establish my eligibility for the grant. I also understand that the Branch may confirm my age and address with the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia.

IT IS AN OFFENCE (SUBJECT TO A PENALTY OF UP TO \$10,000) TO MAKE A FALSE APPLICATION FOR A HOME OWNER GRANT

117645 9001

96

BACK OF FORM

CITY OF RICHMOND 2005 PROPERTY TAX NOTICE

Location :	Mailing Address:
6911 No. 3 Road	P.O. Box 94351
Richmond, BC	Richmond, BC
V6Y 2C1	V6Y 2A6

Phone Number: 604-276-4145

Payment and Home Owner Grant Due Date:
July 4, 2005

(If eligible, please complete the home owner grant on the reverse and return this portion with your payment. You may complete and return the Home Owner Grant without making a payment).

TELLER STAMP