



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee **Date:** March 6, 2026
From: Mark Corrado **File:** 12-8060-01/2025-Vol
 Director, Community Bylaws & Licencing 01
Re: **Business Licence Activity Report – 2025 Year in Review**

Staff Recommendation

That the report titled “Business Licence Activity Report – 2025 Year in Review” dated March 6, 2026, from the Director, Community Bylaws & Licencing, be received for information.

Mark Corrado
 Director, Community Bylaws & Licencing
 (604-204-8673)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Economic Development Finance Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

This report provides a review of business licence activity in 2025, including data from the third and fourth quarter, along with an update of Business Licencing activities in the City of Richmond.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #2 Strategic and Sustainable Community Growth:

2.5 Work collaboratively and proactively to attract and retain businesses to support a diversified economic base.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #4 Responsible Financial Management and Governance:

4.2 Seek improvements and efficiencies in all aspects of City business.

Analysis

Business Licencing Revenue

The City adopted the Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standard at the end of 2024. This standard changed how revenue was accounted for on a monthly accrual basis to a cash basis with the full amount now being recognized as soon as the effective start date of the licence. As a result, business licence revenue is now reported differently. Table 1 sets out January to June 2025 revenues and July to December 2025 revenues.

Table 1: 2025 Total Business Licence Departmental Revenue

	2025 Jan - Jun	2025 Jul - Dec	2025 Total
Revenue	\$ 2,922,403	\$ 2,570,343	\$5,492,746

Application Processing

The licencing application process is a crucial step since it confirms whether the businesses have the required approvals from agencies that regulate health, safety and other municipal, provincial or federal requirements. This process is overseen with thoroughness and efficiency, and the following measures of performance are used:

- **“Valid Licences”** is the number of businesses with valid licences.
- **“Expired Licences”** is the number of businesses that have not paid to renew their licence within 60 days of being sent an invoice. Staff follow up with these businesses regarding the outstanding licencing fees and confirm whether they are permanently closed.
- **“Pending/Change Applications”** are businesses that have applied for a new licence or a change request of an existing licence, and are waiting for their applications to be processed. Staff work to keep this number low by prioritizing these applications.

- **“Total Licences”** is the total number of business licences that are valid, expired (and being checked) and under application review.

Table 2 notes the total number of business licences and their status for 2024 and 2025. These statistics are measured quarterly, rather than annually, as the numbers fluctuate throughout the year due to a variety of factors, including varying numbers of daily application submissions, premise alteration requests, change requests, or permanent business closures.

Table 2: Number and Status of Business Licences in 2024 and 2025

	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Valid Licences	13,982	14,007	14,518	14,317	13,708	14,368	14,427	14,882
Expired Licences	2,137	2,708	2,515	2,705	3,110	2,674	2,736	2,148
Pending/Change Applications	803	765	725	680	752	822	726	688
Total Licences	16,922	17,480	17,758	17,702	17,570	17,864	17,889	17,718

In the fourth quarter of 2025, total licences increased by 16 compared to the same quarter in 2024. Valid licences increased by 565 (4.0%), of note, between Q4 2024 and Q4 2025, the number of expired licences decreased by 557 (20.6%), reflecting efforts to follow up on outstanding/non-compliant businesses, confirming their status, and ensure the licences are captured in the right category. This includes targeted mail outs and strategic deployment of licence inspectors to hotspot areas with outstanding licence invoices.

Table 3 highlights the number of new business licences issued in each quarter. In 2025, a total of 2,105 new business licences were issued, representing an increase of 49 (2.4%) when contrasted with the 2,056 new licences issued in 2024. The slight increase indicates a positive trend in business activity despite the challenging economic environment.

Table 3: New Business Licences Issued By Quarter

	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Total Issued	441	630	541	444	556	629	528	392

MyBusiness Portal

The City’s MyBusiness portal, launched in July 2022, enables business licence applicants/holders to renew, submit, or modify existing licences efficiently and effectively. Business engagement with the portal remains strong with approximately 74% of active businesses linking their licences to an account. At the end of 2025, approximately 10,753 businesses had registered with the portal to manage their licences. MyBusiness portal plays an important role in delivering a higher service level to the public, offering remote 24/7 access to the system.

Business Licence Enforcement

In 2025, Business Licence Inspectors issued 572 bylaw violations for various offences, including operating a business without a licence or contrary to licence conditions. Businesses operating without a valid licence are typically issued a warning and provided with steps to achieve compliance. If a follow-up inspection confirms continued non-compliance, a bylaw violation notice is issued. Enforcement activity can result in increased fine revenue or general licence revenue when tickets are converted from a finable violation notice to a warning if the business pays its outstanding business licence fees.

This strategy of targeting non-compliant businesses resulted in a considerable number of businesses opting to come into compliance rather than being subject to more bylaw enforcement. In many cases, discretion was implemented to convert finable violations into warning violations for businesses with no significant history of bylaw enforcement, provided they applied for, paid for, and obtained a licence in a timely manner. In 2025, a total of \$97,090 in enforcement revenue was collected. Table 4 highlights total enforcement revenues for 2024 and 2025.

Table 4: Business Licence Enforcement Revenue for 2024 and 2025

	2024 Jan - Jun	2024 Jul - Dec	2025 Jan - Jun	2025 Jul - Dec
Revenue from Tickets	\$ 51,700	\$ 35,095	\$ 51,790	\$ 45,300

Highlights from 2025

Counter Illicit Finance Alliance of British Columbia (CIFA-BC), and Joint Enforcement Initiative

Following the City’s acceptance to the Counter Illicit Finance Alliance of British Columbia (CIFA-BC) in September 2025, members of the BC Gaming Policy Enforcement Branch (GPEB) and the City’s Business Licence Department began information-sharing related to potential illegal gambling operations in Richmond. In November 2025, a Joint Inspection Team (JIT) was established with a mandate to target liquor primary establishments and suspected illegal gaming houses. After several weeks of coordination and operational planning, the JIT conducted a successful field operation on December 20, 2025. The operation resulted in the issuance of 17 Bylaw Violation Notice (BVNs) and 6 Municipal Ticket Information (MTIs), totaling \$9,400 in fines. This initiative marks the first major joint enforcement effort between GPEB and a City bylaw unit. Continued collaboration and operations will continue in 2026.

Delinquent Business Licence Process

In collaboration with IT, an automated email notification process was implemented in Q3 of 2025, targeting businesses with licences expired beyond the 60-day grace period. A total of 2,051 notices were sent, prompting 922 businesses to submit payment, representing a 45% compliance response rate. The initiative generated \$222,608 in recovered revenue and demonstrated the effectiveness of leveraging automation to strengthen regulatory compliance, improve operational efficiency, and enhance revenue performance. Overall, the process is considered highly successful, delivering strong, measurable outcomes and establishing a scalable model for future compliance initiatives.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

This report provides the Community Safety Committee with an overview of business licence activity and revenue collected by the Business Licencing Department for 2025. Overall, revenues for 2025 remain strong despite a challenging economic climate. The increase in valid licences from year over year remains a positive indicator of Richmond's economic health and reflects staff's proactive efforts to follow up with businesses operating without a valid licence.



Mark Corrado
Director, Community Bylaws & Licencing
(604-204-8673)