



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee **Date:** April 19, 2022
From: Mark Corrado **File:** 12-8060-00/Vol 02
 Director, Community Bylaws & Licencing
Re: **Business Licence Activity Report – First Quarter 2022**

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled “Business Licence Activity Report – First Quarter 2022”, dated April 19, 2022, 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Finance Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

This report provides an update of business licence activity for the first quarter of 2022.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #1 A Safe and Resilient City:

Enhance and protect the safety and well-being of Richmond.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #7 A Supported Economic Sector:

Facilitate diversified economic growth through innovative and sustainable policies, practices and partnerships.

Analysis

Business Licence Revenue

The total revenue collected by the end of the first quarter in 2022 was \$1,809,955 which represents a slight increase in revenue from Q1 2021 (Table 1). The number of new business licences issued in Q1 of 2022 is down slightly from the last year. The growth in licence revenue can be seen as a positive indicator of overall economic health in Richmond as businesses adapt to operating in an environment with fewer public health restrictions.

Table 1: Quarterly Revenue from Business Licences

	2019 Q1	2020 Q1	2021 Q1	2022 Q1
New Businesses	458	417	352	335
Licence Revenue	\$ 1,915,497	\$ 1,520,096	\$ 1,785,852	\$ 1,809,955

Application Processing

The licensing process ensures that businesses have received all required approvals from those organizations that regulate health and safety as well as any other municipal, provincial or federal requirements. This process is monitored to ensure that it is both timely and thorough. Staff use the following measures of performance:

- Valid Licences – this is the number of businesses with valid, paid licences.
- Expired Licences – this is the number of businesses who have not paid to renew their licence from a previous year. Staff follow up with these businesses to confirm if they have either closed or just have not paid their invoice.
- Suspended/Pending Applications – these are businesses that have applied for a new licence or for changes to an existing licence and are waiting for a review of their application. Staff work to keep this number as low as possible by prioritizing these applications.
- Total Licences – this is the total number of all licences that are either valid, expired (and being checked) or under application review.

The statistics shown in Table 2 are measured quarterly as the numbers fluctuate throughout the year due to a variety of factors, (new applications arrive daily, businesses close down and premises alterations are requested), and are not annual totals.

Table 2: Number and Status of Business Licences

	2021 Q1	2021 Q2	2021 Q3	2021 Q4	2022 Q1
Valid Licences	13,341	13,586	13,558	13,792	13,662
Expired Licences	1,318	962	967	812	1,034
Suspended/Pending Applications	457	468	583	486	741
Total Licences	15,116	15,016	15,108	15,090	15,437

First quarter valid licences increased from 2021 – 2022, which demonstrated improved business health in light of changing pandemic restrictions. Expired licences increased due to both businesses having closed and because they were operating without paying for the renewal of their licence. Staff continue to proactively verify the operational status of businesses and it is anticipated that this figure will decrease as these licences are reclassified.

Business Licence Enforcement

As the business environment adapts to operating under loosened public health orders, enforcement staff shifted to focusing on expired licence follow-up. The impact of evolving priorities is outlined in Table 3, which summarizes revenue from tickets issued for contraventions of the Business Licence Bylaw No. 7360. Fine revenue quarter-quarter is up, in part due to the efforts to address businesses operating without a licence. Businesses continuing to operate without a valid licence are given a warning and then issued a ticket if fees are unpaid.

Table 3: Quarterly Business Licence Enforcement Revenue

Q1	2020	2021	2022
Revenue from Tickets	\$ 3,800	\$ 3,600	\$ 6,675

Education and Enforcement Support for COVID-19 Health Orders

The overall number of calls to investigate, educate and enforce COVID-19 related Public Health Orders decreased in the first quarter of 2022. Staff answer and investigate approximately five to ten calls per week. As public health orders lifted, such as the indoor mask mandate and indoor capacity limits, many pandemic related calls were related to out-of-date or missing Worksafe Safety plans and more recently Vaccine Passport Compliance.

Illegal Ride-Hailing Enforcement

In the first quarter of 2022 at the request of the Passenger Transportation Branch (PTB), the City, along with the RCMP and Transit Police, conducted two joint-operations targeting illegal ride-hailing services. The outcome of these joint operations are highlighted below.

Table 4: 2022 Total Fines Issued

Agency	Total Fine
Passenger Transportation Branch	\$ 9,829
City of Richmond	\$ 2,250*
Total	\$ 12,079

*Pending adjudication determination

Table 5: 2022 Total Tickets Issued

Agency	Total Tickets
Passenger Transportation Branch	16
City of Richmond	5
Total	21

Staff will continue to work with the PTB on a joint-operational basis and will continue to advocate for the Province to release comprehensive ride-hailing enforcement statistics.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

This report provides an update to the Community Safety Committee on first quarter results for 2022 in the Business Licences Department. In 2022, revenue rose slightly when contrasted with the first quarter of 2021. The increase in total licences is a positive indicator of overall economic health. As staff resources dedicated to enforcement of COVID-19 Public Health Orders shift back to regular inspection and enforcement duties, a primary focus will be processing applications and following up on expired licences.



Mark Corrado
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