



Staff Report

TO: The Mayor and Members of the City Council
DATE: November 11, 2015
SUBJECT: REVISED Study Session Agenda for November 16, 2015
PREPARED BY: Don Tripp, City Manager

Please Note: Study Sessions and Post City Council meetings are open to the public, and individuals are welcome to attend and observe. However, these meetings are not intended to be interactive with the audience, as this time is set aside for City Council to receive information, make inquiries, and provide Staff with policy direction.

Looking ahead to next Monday night's Study Session, the following schedule has been prepared:

A light dinner will be served in the Council Family Room 6:00 P.M.

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

- 1. Report from Mayor (5 minutes)
2. Reports from City Councillors (10 minutes)

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

PRESENTATIONS

None at this time.

6:30 P.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 1. Discuss strategy and progress on the sale, acquisition, trade or exchange of certain water property rights and the City's position relative thereto, pursuant to WMC section 1-11-3 (C)(2) and (7) and CRS 24-6-402(4)(a) and (e)(I)
2. Obtain Direction from City Council re proposed Economic Development Agreement with medical instrument manufacturer pursuant to WMC 1-11-3(C)(4), WMC 1-11-3 (C)(7) and CRS 24-6-402(4)(e)(I)
3. Provide instruction to the City's negotiators regarding a dispute with a former development consultant concerning a redevelopment proposal and receive legal advice from the City Attorney on the same as authorized by Sections 1-11-3(C)(3), (7) and (8), W.M.C., and Sections 24-6-402 (4)(b) and (e), C.R.S.
4. Consultation with the City Attorney and to provide direction to negotiators related to the City's golf course concessionaire contract as permitted by W.M.C. 1-11-3(C)(3)(7) and (8) and by C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) and (e) - Verbal

INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS

- 1. Community Development Electronic Permitting System

Additional items may come up between now and Monday night. City Council will be apprised of any changes to the Study Session meeting schedule.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald M. Tripp
City Manager

NOTE: Persons needing an accommodation must notify the City Manager's Office no later than noon the Thursday prior to the scheduled Study Session to allow adequate time to make arrangements. You can call 303-658-2161 /TTY 711 or State Relay or write to mbarajas@cityofwestminster.us to make a reasonable accommodation request.



## Staff Report

Information Only Staff Report  
November 16, 2015



**SUBJECT:** Community Development Electronic Permitting System Update

**PREPARED BY:** Michelle Stephens, Business Operations Coordinator

### Summary Statement

- This report is for information only and requires no action by City Council.
- An independent evaluation of the City's development review process (audit) was completed by Matrix consulting in winter 2014/2015. Multiple recommendations for improvement were identified and Staff is working towards implementation of all of the recommendations. To date, Staff has implemented quarterly reporting on performance, increased advertising of the availability of Friday building inspections, increased the hours for the submittal of planning applications, improved coordination between Economic Development and Community Development Staff, provided guidance and standards for customer service, and publicized the role of the Principal Planner as a development review coordinator.
- The need for an electronic permitting software was identified as one of the key recommendations in the 2014/2015 evaluation of the current development review process (audit).
- The Department of Community Development has completed an extensive search to identify the appropriate vendor to implement a department-wide electronic permitting system in response to the recommendations of the audit.
- A nationwide search was conducted and TRACKiT Land Management Software, by SUNGARD, was identified as the preferred vendor.
- TRACKiT will enhance the Community Development Department's operations by automating permitting, tracking projects, and managing inspections while providing transparency throughout the overall process.
- \$600,000 was appropriated from FY2014 carryover into FY2015 for the selection, acquisition and implementation of an e-permitting system associated with the 2015 Strategic Plan action item "Implement Community Development service enhancement (audit) recommendations."
- Staff anticipates bringing the finalized contract for Council review and action in December 2015. Implementation of the new system is anticipated to be complete during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2016.

### Background Information

The need for electronic development review software was identified as part of the 2014/2015 evaluation of the development review process, which stated the need to:

*...implement a single development review software that encompasses the entire development review process and not only the building permitting function. This software will address many concerns identified and provide much greater functionality to both staff and applicants including: electronic plan submittal by applicants, electronic plan review by staff, simpler and more timely compilation of development review comments by all reviews, ability for applicants to review status of applications and review specific staff comments online. (Final Report of the Development Review Process Evaluation Project, Matrix, January 29, 2015).*

In response, Staff prepared and issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the “Westminster Electronic Permitting System” (WEPS) noting that:

*The ideal software system will be used to efficiently manage workflows and record keeping related to a variety of building, engineering, planning and land use permits, contractor registration, code enforcement cases, periodic inspections, and regulatory enforcement programs. The system will make cross-departmental permit tracking, notification and reporting possible and will streamline and improve customers’ access to Department of Community Development information and processes. Online permit and license processing, electronic plan review of development plans, plats and engineering construction documents are goals of this project.*

The RFP provided an option for the bidders to either provide a department-wide solution or a solution that excludes the Building Division functions (and would be used by only the Planning and Engineering Divisions). All bidders provided a department-wide solution, noting that one of the key reasons to adopting an electronic permitting system is to improve coordination and communication between divisions throughout the development review process.

The RFP was issued on June 29, 2015, to 13 vendors, including the Building Division’s current electronic permitting provider, Accela. Staff received five proposals on the due date (8/3/2015). After a rigorous evaluation process by the evaluation team and the City’s business improvement consultant, BMGI, half-day onsite interviews were conducted for the four finalists the week of September 14. All four finalist firms provide the basic functionality required and interviewed well. As the interviews did not identify a clear leader, Staff proceeded with reference checks for all four finalist firms. Based on the results of the reference checks, two top vendors, EnerGov and TRACKiT, were identified for brief follow-up interviews. The follow up interviews provided clarification regarding some aspects of each vendor’s software’s functionality. Based on the interviews, reference checks, and Staff’s experiences, the ultimate vendor ranking is as follows:

1. TRACKiT (SunGard)
2. EnerGov (Tyler)
3. CityView (Harris)
4. Accela

The ranking, in terms of initial pricing, was as follows:

1. Accela: \$637,411
2. CityView: \$688,522
3. Energov: \$783,958
4. TRACKiT: \$797,878 (As currently drafted, the proposed fee for software and configuration is approximately \$515,000)

(Note: The pricing above reflects the purchase of software, licenses, implementation, project management, and 2 years of maintenance.)

Although TRACKiT was not initially the lowest bidder, they were identified as the preferred vendor for the following reasons:

- Location-centric database (i.e., all data stored by location making it easy to find)
- User interface is highly configurable based upon individual preference (“dashboard” concept)
- Integrates well with the City’s GIS system, utilizing our data
- Friendly public-interface (e-TRACKiT)
- Favorable references from local jurisdictions (Arvada and Parker)
- Highly configurable by the City’s Application Specialist reducing reliance on consultant support
- Focused on planning and permitting (does not try to be all things to all people)
- Organization of proposal (scope and approach for implementation and training are excellent)

The other three finalists, Accela, EnerGov, and CityView, were eliminated for the following reasons.

Accela – The Building Division Staff have been using Accela for approximately 10 years and continue to be disappointed in Accela's customer service. Other users noted a lack of customer service and pro-active issue resolution during the reference check.

Staff also expected the price of Accela to be dramatically lower than the other vendors as we are currently an Accela customer and only limited new software would be required. The majority of Accela's fee was due to configuration expense and Staff feels that the chosen software should be configuration-friendly, thus allowing persons to make modifications moving forward instead of relying on the vendor (especially a vendor that does not have a record of attentive customer service). The Accela services fee was \$85,000 higher than Energov (the next highest services fee) and \$246,000 higher than TRACKiT (the lowest services fee). The City currently has a continuous need to hire 3rd party vendors to configure changes to the Accela system.

Staff wanted a system that would integrate seamlessly with the City's GIS system and store data based on location. Location-centric databases, like GIS, provide all of our customers an intuitive way to search for actions on specific properties as most project within Community Development affect real property. Currently there are significant Address/Parcel/Owner (APO) issues that prohibit Accela's integration with the City's GIS system and prohibits the City from offering online permitting.

Accela markets itself as an enterprise system that can provide services City-wide, providing all services to all teams; however, Staff discovered that utilizing Accela in the City Attorney's Office and in Community Development presents some significant data sharing issues. Specifically, Staff has concerns that Community Development Staff will have access to the City Attorney's Office records due to the database requirements of Accela.

In addition to concerns identified above, the Accela user interface is not as intuitive as the other vendors. In response to this concern Accela proposed to implement version 8.0, which has a modern user interface on the dashboard screen; however, this product is not yet released and the beta version is receiving negative reviews by the Accela community.

EnerGov – EnerGov, like TRACKiT, is a location-centric system. It was also highly favored by Staff due to its intuitive interface and reliance on GIS data; however, ultimately Staff is not recommending EnerGov as we were not comfortable with their use of Crystal reporting and the limited amount of local users who have gone live (i.e., lack of local references). If terms cannot be reached with TRACKiT, Staff recommends entering negotiations with EnerGov.

CityView – CityView was not recommended as it is not a web-based application and would need to be deployed on each user's PC. Installation and updates would place a heavy burden on the Information Technology Department Staff (IT). Additionally, CityView utilizes MS Silverlight, which is an application that is being phased out and Staff is concerned that CityView would deploy a major update in the near-term that would require the City to re-implement and re-configure the software.

TRACKiT – Since identifying TRACKiT as the preferred vendor in mid-October, Staff from Community Development and IT Departments, and the City Attorney's Office have worked closely with TRACKiT to refine the initial scope of work included in the response to the RFP. Changes to TRACKiT's initial scope of work include reducing the number of concurrent users to meet Staff's forecast need, ensuring integration with the City's credit card processor, cashiering, and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system, and adding hours for custom configuration and report

generation. As currently drafted, the proposed fee is approximately \$515,000 (software and installation). Annual maintenance/support fees are approximately \$73,000/year, which will cover support for the entire Community Development Department (4 divisions). These fees would begin in 2017. Currently the City pays approximately \$37,000 to Accela for annual maintenance/support fees of the land management suite (plus other fees for the other suites used by other Departments) used only by the Building Division. Once TRACKiT is deployed, the City will no longer need to pay Accela for annual maintenance of the land management suite currently utilized by the Building Division.

Staff is currently in the final review of the proposed contract and terms and anticipate bringing a contract for Council's consideration in December 2015. This would allow the project to kick-off in January 2016.

In addition to the fees identified above, approximately \$75,000 in immediate hardware upgrades are required to ensure that all functionality of the electronic permitting system can be utilized. These upgrades would not be included in the TRACKiT contract and would be purchased separately by the City's IT Department. Hardware upgrades include larger monitors for plan review staff and ensuring adequate memory and storage space exists onsite and for the disaster recovery site.

Originally, Staff anticipated completion of a new e-permitting system for the Planning and Engineering Divisions in second quarter 2016. However, as noted previously, based on the evaluation of the e-permitting systems and the recommendation to move forward with a comprehensive department-wide solution, including the replacement of the current Building Division software system, the implementation is anticipated to take approximately 9-10 months. This results in an anticipated go-live timeline of third quarter 2016. Staff believes an integrated department-wide system will greatly improve coordination and communication between divisions throughout the development review process, improving the overall process and experience for the customer.

The implementation of an electronic permitting system for the Department of Community Development will support the City's 2015 Strategic Plan Goals, including:

- *Visionary Leadership, Effective Governance and Proactive Regional Collaboration.* An electronic permitting system provides a tool for enhanced collaboration and transparent decision making. Applicants, the public, and other jurisdictions will all have access to plan/project information through the web-based portal.
- *Vibrant, Inclusive and Engaged Community.* TRACKiT's accessible public portal will provide our citizens another opportunity to participate in the development review process.
- *Beautiful, Desirable, Safe and Environmentally Responsible City.* Based on the results of other communities that have implemented an electronic permitting system, Staff anticipates a reduction of paper permit applications and submittal materials by over 50%. This will have a direct result in the reduction of paper waste. Additionally, vehicle trips from customers, as well delivery vehicles, will be reduced.
- *Financially Sustainable Government Providing Excellence in City Services.* The adoption of electronic permitting systems is a growing trend in municipalities. Additionally, many Front Range cities such as Thornton, Arvada, Parker, Boulder, Aurora, and Denver to name a few, have already implemented electronic permitting systems.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald M. Tripp  
City Manager