
Mobile biz licences to continue in the Tri-Cities

But an expanded program may mean a loss of revenue for Port Moody.

[Janis Cleugh](#) / Tri-City News

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DIANA DILWORTH



CRAIG HODGE

Builders, decorators, caterers and other mobile businesses working in the Tri-Cities can still pay an extra fee next year to be on the road.

This week, city councils in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody extended the inter-municipal business licensing program, allowing companies to travel freely across the region to provide programs and services locally.

The mobile licence — a \$165 "add-on" to the regular business levy — has grown in popularity since the program launched Jan. 1, 2013.

According to city staff reports released this week, 232 mobile permits have been purchased so far this year versus 203 last year.

Still, there's talk to make the program even bigger and permanent, a move that would help Tri-City businesses move into neighbouring cities.

A spokesperson for the ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, which oversees the 10 mobile business licence agreements in 69 B.C. municipalities, said discussion has been underway for a year to look at partnerships.

Besides the Tri-Cities, there are agreements in place for "Metro West" (Burnaby, Delta, New Westminister, Richmond, Surrey and Vancouver) and the Fraser Valley (Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Hope, Langley city and township, Maple Ridge, Mission, Pitt Meadows and Surrey).

But a few politicians worry about the potential loss of revenue.

Port Moody Coun. Diana Dilworth, who spearheaded the Tri-City program three years ago with Coquitlam Coun. Craig Hodge and Port Coquitlam Coun. Mike Forrest — along with Tri-Cities' Chamber of Commerce representatives — said the current revenue-sharing model is advantageous to Port Moody.

When the initiative was first created, the three cities wanted to have an even balance for profits and, therefore, divided the mobile licensing proceeds like this: 29% for Coquitlam, 18% for PoCo and 53% for Port Moody.

What's being considered now, however, is a more common model that would see a 90/10 split, with the issuing municipality retaining 90% of the fees and the 10% balance distributed to the partner cities.

Hodge said the Tri-City program has achieved its overall goal: to make it easier for businesses to operate regionally and to reduce red tape.

And Dilworth said she's looking forward to the program evolving and becoming permanent. She's also open to having a more regional involvement. "The nature of a lot of the businesses is changing," she said. "In the Tri-Cities, there's a lot more businesses running mobile. We need to ask ourselves, How do we support that?"

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