

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY SAFETY
SUBJECT: **EXPANSION OF METRO WEST IMBL PROGRAM TO INCLUDE MOBILE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, AND TO ADJUST IMBL FEE**
PURPOSE: To request that Council adopt updated bylaws and amendments in regard to the Inter-Municipal Business Licence program that will permit mobile health care providers to participate in the Metro West program and to adjust the Inter-Municipal Business Licence fee.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the City Solicitor be authorized to bring forward the proposed Burnaby Inter-Municipal Business Licence Bylaw 2024, substantially in the form set out in Attachment 1 of the report titled “Expansion of Metro West IMBL Program to Include Mobile Health Care Providers, and to Adjust IMBL Fee” dated October 21, 2024;

THAT the City Solicitor be authorized to bring forward the proposed Burnaby Inter-Municipal Business Licence Agreement Bylaw 2024, substantially in the form set out in Attachment 2 of the report titled “Expansion of Metro West IMBL Program to Include Mobile Health Care Providers, and to Adjust IMBL Fee” dated October 21, 2024; and

THAT the City Solicitor be authorized to bring forward amendments to the Burnaby Consolidated Fees and Charges Bylaw in accordance with section 3.2 of the report titled “Expansion of Metro West IMBL Program to Include Mobile Health Care Providers, and to Adjust IMBL Fee” dated October 21, 2024.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

This report aligns with Council-adopted policies contained in the Burnaby Strategic Plan (2022).

2.0 BACKGROUND

Inter-municipal business licence (IMBL) programs help support dynamic local and regional economies by reducing administrative burdens and costs by allowing eligible businesses to operate in multiple municipalities with the purchase of a single licence. In addition to the business advantages, consumers also benefit from increased choice as businesses are encouraged to expand their services across participating municipalities. The terms and conditions of an IMBL, including eligibility criteria, the fee, and licence administration, are set out in a set of common bylaws enacted by each participating

municipality. In BC there are 17 IMBL partnerships between 104 municipalities.

The City of Burnaby participates in the Metro West IMBL program, which was initially launched as a pilot in 2013, for businesses involved in the construction industry operating in Burnaby, Vancouver, Delta, New Westminster, Richmond, and Surrey. In 2015 the participating municipalities agreed to convert the pilot IMBL to a permanent program, and to expand the program beyond construction to allow businesses that repair, inspect and maintain land and buildings (e.g. arborists, building inspectors and janitors) to obtain an IMBL.

Under provisions of the Metro West IMBL agreement, businesses must first obtain a business licence in their home municipality (the municipality where they maintain business premises) and for an additional fee, they can then choose to add an IMBL. A condition of the IMBL is that the business must comply with all relevant bylaws for each of the municipalities in which they perform work.

As eligible businesses have become aware of the program, uptake of the Metro West IMBL has steadily grown. Since 2015 the annual number issued has increased seventeen-fold. In 2023 a total of 6,817 IMBLs were issued by the six Metro West participating municipalities. In Burnaby there were 931 IMBLs in 2023, and 1031 IMBLs in 2024 year to date.

In order for Burnaby to take part in the Metro West IMBL program, the *Community Charter* required Council to adopt two bylaws. The first bylaw, the *Burnaby Inter-Municipal Business Licence Agreement Bylaw*, was necessary for the City to enter an agreement with the participating municipalities to implement and administer the IMBL program. The second bylaw, the *Burnaby Inter-Municipal Business Licence Bylaw*, established the regulations for the Metro West IMBL program. Both bylaws, as well as the *Burnaby Consolidated Fees and Charges Bylaw*, will need to be updated so that the recommended updates to the program as discussed below, can be implemented.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 Adding Mobile Health Providers to the Metro West IMBL Program

Staff from each of the Metro West IMBL participating municipalities, as well as staff from the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, meet on a regular basis as a working group to discuss the program and review requests. As a result of a request submitted by representatives of mobile health care operators, the IMBL working group undertook a review and has agreed to seek approval of each of the respective Metro West municipal Councils to expand the Metro West IMBL definition of “inter-municipal business” to include home care and nursing, and other health care professionals and services.

The review found that home health care and other in-home support services businesses are good candidates for the Metro West IMBL. Many of these mobile businesses serve clients in multiple Lower Mainland municipalities providing services such as midwifery, registered massage therapy, fitness training, and counselling services, among others.

As part of the review, staff met with the BC Care Providers Association and business owners. These groups expressed unanimous support for the proposal to include businesses that provide in-home health care and related services in the Metro West IMBL program. Staff heard that the reduced administrative and cost burdens will be welcome for businesses that already operate in two or more municipalities, may encourage and enable existing businesses to expand their service areas, and can benefit clients who may see increased service options.

It is proposed that the IMBL would be available to mobile health care professionals and health care service providers who provide services by visiting clients in their homes. If approved by all participating municipalities, the Metro West IMBL will be available to mobile health care professionals and services businesses starting January 1, 2025.

In order to implement the change, the participating municipalities will be seeking their Council’s approval to bring forward a new *Inter-Municipal Business Licence Bylaw* and *Inter-Municipal Business Licence Agreement Bylaw*. See **Attachment 1** and **Attachment 2** for Burnaby’s versions of these proposed bylaws. Upon final adoption, these new bylaws will repeal and replace the current versions of the bylaws, effective January 1, 2025.

3.2 IMBL fee update

When the Metro West IMBL was first introduced in 2013, the fee was set at \$250 per year. At that time a revenue sharing agreement among the participating municipalities was also established. In 2015 the revenue sharing agreement was simplified from a model where each municipality’s received a set share of total revenue (participant’s share was based on the proportionate share of each municipality’s non-resident licence revenue prior to the start of the program) to one in which each municipality retains 90% of its IMBL revenue that it has sold and distributes the remaining 10% evenly among the other partners.

When the Metro West IMBL pilot launched in 2013, the \$250 annual fee was deemed appropriate to yield overall revenue neutrality for each participating municipality. In the years since, while other City business licence fees have been adjusted annually to reflect increased City administrative costs, the IMBL fee has remained unchanged. Unlike other business licence fees that can be updated by the authority of a single municipal Council, the IMBL fee has been established under the agreement and can only be amended with the consent of all six participating municipalities. It is proposed that the IMBL fee be increased to \$300 per year, as set out in the new *Inter-Municipal Business Licence Bylaw* (see **Attachment 1**).

In order to align with other participating municipalities and ensure that the IMBL is not independently increased by Burnaby annually, the following amendment to the row relating to the IMBL fee in Schedule A2 of the Consolidated Fees and Charges Bylaw is proposed, effective January 1, 2025:

IMBL (Inter-Municipal Business Licence)	See section 8, Burnaby Inter-Municipal Business Licence Bylaw
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4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The *Community Charter* requires that before adopting a bylaw in regard to business regulation, Council must first give notice of its intention and provide an opportunity for persons who consider they are affected by the bylaw to make representations to Council. In order to ensure all interested parties are provided sufficient notification of the proposed new *Burnaby Inter-Municipal Business Licence Bylaw 2024* and amendment to the *Burnaby Consolidated Fees and Charges Bylaw*, a public notice will be published on the City's website and as part of the City's online newsletter, in accordance with the *Burnaby Public Notice Bylaw 2023*. All responses will be collected and provided to Council prior to final adoption of the bylaws.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Financial analysis suggests that increasing the fee from \$250 to \$300 will help to offset cost escalation experienced by participating municipalities over the last ten years.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Critchley, General Manager Community Safety

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Proposed Burnaby Inter-Municipal Business Licence Bylaw 2024

Attachment 2 – Proposed Burnaby Inter-Municipal Business Licence Agreement Bylaw 2024

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Dan Layng, Chief Licence Inspector, and reviewed by May Leung, City Solicitor.