

City Manager's Office Report to
Business Advisory Committee
2019 September 20

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
BAC2019-1193

Business Advisory Committee Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) has held several regular meetings and a working group has been established since its Terms of Reference was approved on 2019 March 18. The working group includes external stakeholders who provide insight into perceived and systemic barriers businesses face when working with The City and identify opportunities where The City can improve its practices to ensure services are delivered in an efficient and effective manner. The BAC has prioritized the opportunities identified by the working group to-date and has directed Administration to further investigate three priorities and pilot one project. The three priority areas identified are Restaurant, Change of Use and Industrial Land.

This report provides a summary of the committee's identified three priority areas along with a progress update on the pilot project, and includes recommended updates to the BAC Terms of Reference.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

The Business Advisory Committee recommends that Council approve the amended Terms of Reference as outlined in Attachment 2.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2018 October 15 Council directed through the Notice of Motion C2018-1219 that "Council support the creation of the Business Advisory Committee"; that "Council nominate two (2) Councillors during the October 22nd Organizational Meeting of Council to serve as members of the Business Advisory Committee (one Councillor to serve as Chair, Cllr Sutherland); that the Business Advisory Committee report back to Priorities and Finance Committee semi-annually; and that "the Business Advisory Committee bring back a proposed Terms of Reference no later than December 2018."

On 2018 November 19 Council directed through the Notice of Motion C2018-1351 that "Council defer the due date of a proposed Terms of Reference from 2018 December to Q1 2019".

On 2019 March 18 Council approved the proposed Terms of Reference for the Business Advisory Committee.

On 2019 April 3 Councillor Demong was elected Vice-Chair of the Business Advisory Committee, by acclamation and acknowledging the City Manager delegation to S. Sharp.

On 2019 June 17, Council requested the Business Advisory Committee to consider Report PFC2019-0384, Social Procurement Update and provide an opinion to Council by no later than Q4 2019. The Working Group through BAC will provide an opinion on the Social Procurement Update by October 31, 2019.

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BACKGROUND

Since the establishment of the Business Advisory Committee in 2019 March, two regular meetings have been held along with several working group meetings. The working group provided feedback on a proposed business friendly campaign and refreshed content on The City's external website, as well as identifying several opportunities for The City to explore, as outlined below. Additionally, the working group provided The City with the opportunity to promote The City's Financial Task Force Committee, and encourage industry stakeholders to participate to share their feedback on property tax issues.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Progress Update

Several opportunities have been identified and prioritized through the BAC working group and subsequently resulted in one pilot project and three priorities to be explored. The three priorities are:

1. Restaurants
 - Municipal and Provincial collaboration. Importance of being more responsive with timelines.
2. Change of Use
 - Stakeholders would like a focus on streamlining process and permitting.
3. Industrial Land
 - Work on ensuring City industrial land stays regionally competitive

The pilot project, which is now underway, is exploring solutions to resolve barriers for Indemnified Contractors when working with The City. This includes streamlining the approvals processes for the necessary permits for Indemnified Contractors to conduct business in Calgary and in turn creating a flexible and functional customer service experience for them. Administration will report back to BAC in Q4 2019 with a status update on the barriers resolved to-date for Indemnified Contractors. See Attachment 1 for BAC Workplan.

Terms of Reference

Three updates are required through the application of the Terms of Reference approved in 2019 March:

- 1) That the reporting structure for BAC is recommended to be report directly to Council. This ensures the BAC has the most direct and streamlined process in place to support its ability to deliver on its mandate.
- 2) Initially the BAC working group had a set membership. External stakeholders of the working group expressed concerns on potentially being penalized in future dealings with The City if they were highlighting internal issues. As a result, the Business Advisory Committee decided that it was best to have more focused working group meetings by sector in a confidential environment. This will make it possible for industry members to provide more candid feedback on their experience when working with The City.
- 3) Allow for a designate member of Council to serve as an alternate when required to meet quorum.
- 4) Changes to City Manager Delegate to align with the mandate of the Business and Local Economy Program.

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See Attachment 2 for the updated Terms of Reference.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Engagement and two-way communications with the business community and affiliated partners and stakeholders is a priority for The City of Calgary. Strategic communications and ongoing engagement enables issues to be surfaced and improved, and as a result, create the ideal conditions for businesses to thrive. The Business Advisory Committee will continue to receive advice and recommendations from working groups, prioritize perceived systemic barriers and work with respective City departments to resolve and extinguish issues and remove red tape. Essential to these conversations and improvements is creating awareness within the business community on how their feedback is being used or addressed, and new or improved services, information and resources. BAC will start to share updates with the broader community of business owners and investors once solutions or service improvements have been determined and implemented.

Strategic Alignment

This report aligns with Council's priority of prosperous City: "Calgary continues to grow as a magnet for talent, a place where there is opportunity for all, and strive to be the best place in Canada to start and grow a business" (Council Directives for One Calgary 2019-2022). In addition, this report aligns with Business Environment Focus area of Calgary's Economic Strategy by working with government and business to continually improve City services to foster Calgary's business environment, innovation ecosystem and help build the foundation for business success.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

There are no current operating budget impacts.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

There are no current and future capital budget impacts.

Risk Assessment

The Business Advisory Committee will ensure the identification of person(s) in the collection of external stakeholder conversations in working group sessions remains confidential. Working group participants that partake in a whiteboard session are notified that all discussions are subject to Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act) of Alberta.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The recommendation to adopt the updated Business Advisory Committee Terms of Reference will support confidential whiteboarding sessions with focused business sectors. It is important to provide a safe environment where business stakeholders can address the barriers that they face in their everyday operations. This reinforces Calgary's "open for business"/business-friendly reputation with investors and business owners and supports Administration in delivering services in an efficient and effective manner.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – Business Advisory Work Plan
2. Attachment 2 – Business Advisory Committee Terms of Reference