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SPC on Planning and Urban Development
2019 November 06

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
PUD2019-1321

Beltline Community Investment Fund Terms of Reference Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Beltline Community Investment Fund (BCIF) Committee is proposing two changes to the Terms of Reference in order to enable the Committee to do a better job of representing area interests and implementing small-scale projects. The two changes include:

1. expanding the membership to include a new Ward Councillor, an additional Business Improvement Area, an additional community representative and an additional developer representative
2. increasing the allocation authority threshold dollar value for projects that do not require Council approval from \$75,000 to \$200,000

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That the SPC on Planning and Urban Development recommend that Council approve the proposed changes to the Beltline Community Investment Fund Terms of Reference as outlined in Attachment 2.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

None.

BACKGROUND

The Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan (approved 2006 May 15, Bylaw 2P2006) allows for the earning of bonus density through cash contributions to a community investment fund, the Beltline Community Investment Fund (BCIF). The collected monies facilitate and finance improvements to the public realm in the Beltline community. To date, the fund has collected approximately \$14 million, and spent (or approved for spending) approximately \$11 million on a variety of projects that include Central Memorial Park, underpass enhancements (1 Street SW, 4 Street SW, 8 Street SW), 17 Avenue reconstruction and the relocation of the McHugh House.

Since 2017, there has been a new Ward added in the Beltline area (Ward 11) and the Committee has begun to see an increased emphasis on smaller projects and projects initiated by community groups. Due to these changes, there is a need to revise the membership and adjust the way funds can be distributed to smaller scale projects to allow for projects to proceed more quickly and to attract new ideas for implementation.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The BCIF Committee has been discussing the operation and terms of reference of the Committee for several years. The existing Terms of Reference are included as Attachment 1 to this report. The main topics for discussion have included:

- reviewing the diversity of membership
- increasing the maximum amount the Committee can approve without Council approval, in order to streamline the funding of smaller initiatives (from \$75,000 to \$200,000)
- expanding the range of initiatives that can be funded to include programming and temporary installations

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- allowing for a more strategic role for the Committee to become proactive in soliciting grant applications and promoting and marketing the fund

In order to effectively advance work on the full range of topics, the Committee feels the first steps are to:

1. expand the membership to include a new Ward Councillor, an additional Business Improvement Area, an additional community representative and an additional developer representative
2. increase the allocation authority threshold dollar value for projects that do not require Council approval from \$75,000 to \$200,000

Membership

The existing Committee currently consists of the following:

- Chair, Manager Centre City Planning and Implementation (Urban Strategy)
- Centre City Implementation (Program Manager)
- Transportation Department (1 rep)
- Parks Business Unit (1 Rep)
- Beltline Community Association (1 rep)
- Development industry rep (as appointed by BILD Calgary)
- Representatives of local Business Improvement Areas (2 Reps)
- Councillor for Ward 8

BIAs

It is desirable to have all three Business Improvement Areas to be involved as they each bring a unique set of perspectives and stakeholders. It is hoped that the BIAs will also be able to assist in project development and implementation in order to increase the number of projects implemented each year.

Development Industry

In addition to the voice of BILD representing the development industry at-large, the Committee wants to include the participation of a developer that has either contributed to the BCIF or who is actively developing in the Beltline. This knowledge of the Beltline from a developer's perspective will add valuable insights into projects that may help incent development and add to the desirability of the Beltline as a business or residential location.

Community Representation

The Beltline has grown considerably in population since 2006 and adding another community voice would help represent the diversity of residential experiences that are found in the area. The Community has also become a more active initiator and implementer of projects funded by the BCIF and this additional representative will help acknowledge that growing role and influence.

Elected Representatives

Since 2017, the Beltline also includes parts of Ward 11. It is necessary to add this elected official to the Committee.

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The expanded membership of the BCIF Committee would bring the total committee size to 13. In addition to this change in membership, a change in the Chair of the Committee is proposed, from the Manager of Urban Strategy to the Manager of Centre West in Community Planning. This reflects the original intent to have the Committee chaired by the planning manager responsible for the Beltline community.

Allocation Authority Threshold

The existing Terms of Reference makes specific provision for “rapid improvement and community projects” to advance timely improvements to the public realm. One of the main objectives of the Committee is to increase the rate of spending from the fund by implementing smaller projects and projects initiated by external stakeholders.

Originally, the fund focused on large capital projects initiated and delivered by The City. These large City projects can take a long time to conceptualize, design and construct. By focusing on smaller projects, including temporary or pop-up projects, and projects delivered by other groups such as the community association or BIAs, it is hoped that more projects can be delivered that provide greater value to the community overall.

The current allocation authority threshold for Committee approval of \$75,000 makes it difficult to undertake smaller community led projects that are meaningful in scale. Further, the consulting cost to undertake preliminary design work can exceed \$75,000 for some public realm projects. The requirement for council approval can delay schedules by 2 to 3 months. It is therefore proposed to increase the maximum amount the BCIF Committee can authorize up to \$200,000 without Council approval. This amount is in keeping with other Corporate procurement policies for capital construction projects where exemptions from the competitive bid process are possible for projects under \$200,000.

A detailed description of the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference are included as Attachment 2 to this report.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

This report has been circulated in draft form to the members of the existing Committee to ensure it reflects the nature and scope of discussions over the past few years.

Strategic Alignment

The changes to the BCIF Terms of Reference are in alignment with the Downtown Strategy, specifically the Live and Place focus areas. The proposed changes would enable the delivery of meaningful and valued projects to area residents, businesses and developers. Improving the quality of public space recognizes the significant growth experienced in the Beltline while better preparing the area to support further development.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Updating the terms of reference will ensure the community’s social fabric is better represented in funding decisions that affect their quality of life and sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. It will also improve the delivery of projects that can make the community more desirable to live in and help with the marketing of existing and proposed residential and commercial space. This will ultimately lead to a stronger and more resilient tax base.

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From an environmental perspective, many of the projects implemented through the BCIF include environmental enhancements in the form of additional trees and vegetation. Projects are also investigating ways to improve storm water management through public realm design. Also, by developing attractive and desirable high density living environments, it can help demonstrate the benefits of this form of urban development which can improve its potential for implementation in other parts of the city. This will help reduce the city's overall footprint and help reduce the number of trips made by motor vehicles, in turn reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

There is no impact on the current or future operating budgets.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

There is no direct impact on current or future capital budgets. However, projects funded by the BCIF often include capital funding from other City sources. Therefore, these changes may help the City advance other capital projects in the Beltline that are not currently fully funded.

Risk Assessment

Risks of not proceeding with changes.

Not updating the membership to better reflect the stakeholder makeup in the area may reduce the legitimacy of the Committee in the minds of other stakeholders. This can undermine the effectiveness of the Committee and the acceptance of the decisions that it makes.

Not increasing the allocation authority threshold will slow the implementation of rapid improvement or community projects.

Risks of proceeding with changes

Increasing the membership from 9 to 13 members makes for a large Committee. If not effectively managed, larger committees can have trouble in getting to decisions. This is mitigated by the fact that the stakeholder interests are the same (administration, community, business, developer and elected officials). The added representatives help to make for a more resilient committee in the case of absence or turnover of members.

The risk of increasing the allocation authority threshold is the loss of some elected official oversight over larger expenditures. This is mitigated by having two Councillors on the Committee.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The BCIF Committee is recommending these changes to better reflect the stakeholder environment in the Beltline and to enable the increased delivery of rapid improvement and community-based projects that improve the quality of life for residents and businesses. The recommendations and the outcomes intended by the changes are fully aligned with the Downtown Strategy and will help facilitate initiatives under the Live and Place focus areas of the strategy.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – Existing BCIF Terms of Reference
2. Attachment 2 – Summary of Proposed Changes to BCIF Terms of Reference
3. Attachment 3 – Revised Beltline Community Investment Fund Terms of Reference