



APPLICATION FOR COUNCIL INNOVATION FUND

CC 941 (R2019-10)

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Date of Submission

2020-03-03

Name of Project

The Future of Stephen Avenue: Activate + Experiment

Sponsoring Councillor

Druh Farrell, Evan Woolley and Jeff Davison

Applicant Name

Kate Zago

Applicant Contact Number

(403) 268-2234

Include area code, no spaces

Applicant Business Unit or Name of Organization

Calgary Growth Strategies

Affected Business Units and/or Departments

Urban Initiatives

Amount of Funds Requested - please attach budget breakdown details in an attachment

\$300,000.00

Draft PFC cover report attached

Yes No

Please list supporting documents provided.

- Cover PFC Report
- Downtown Strategy, Summary of Focus Areas
- Supplemental Information on The Future of Stephen Avenue: Activations + Experiments
- Estimated Budget for The Future of Stephen Avenue: Activations + Experiments

Applications for the Council Innovation Fund are to be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer Department (name of person) no later than six (6) weeks in advance of the targeted Priorities and Finance Committee (PFC) meeting date.

Only completed applications supported by a PFC cover report will be submitted for placement on the PFC agenda. The PFC will review the report and proposal and provide their recommendation to Council. The recommendation and report will then be forwarded to Council at their next scheduled meeting.

Provide a summary description of the project to a maximum of 2 pages.

Urban Initiatives is requesting funding to embark on a new interim phase for *The Future of Stephen Avenue* project. As *Phase 1: The Public Realm Strategy*, comes to completion in Summer 2020, Urban Initiatives is proposing to embark on **Activate + Experiment**. In this phase, we will work in partnership with the Calgary Downtown Association (CDA) and other strategic partners (ie. Civic partners, post-secondary institutions, building owners and local business) to test short, medium and long-term strategies for a flexible street and to find ways that will allow Stephen Avenue to evolve, adapt, and remain effective for a long period of time at minimal expense.

Innovating the design and project delivery process for *The Future of Stephen Avenue* is critical as we work towards creating a bold vision for Stephen Avenue as a unique destination and place. An economic downturn coupled with the rapid changes in how we shop, work, recreate and inhabit the city, require fresh ideas and new future possibilities that need testing and refinement before final implementation.

Methodology for Activations + Experiments

Over the next two years, Urban Initiatives will work with both internal and external stakeholders to bring forward numerous prototypes, activations, and experiments along Stephen Avenue through a three-step process (listed below). This methodology will ensure that The City:

- 1) **Enacts change:** we take action NOW to improve the social, environmental and economic conditions of the Avenue through innovative processes, products and services.
- 2) **Quantifies change:** the impacts of our actions will be quantified, and used to inform refinements to the *Future of Stephen Avenue* project.
- 3) **Communicates change:** in combination with our strategic partners, The City will advertise our efforts through enhanced outreach, share our results with Calgarians, and celebrate our achievements.

Refer to page 4 of the Council Report for further details of the approach.

Criteria for Activations + Experiments

Project selection for activations and experiments will be chosen based on the below criteria. For a list of project examples refer to Attachment 4.

Triple Bottom Line Approach

- refer to Council Report, page 5 for further detail

Aligned with the Public Realm Study for Stephen Avenue

- What is the impact of the project on the final design, governance models or economic solutions for the Avenue?

Partnership Opportunities

- Are there organizations, businesses or other stakeholders interested in testing out ideas? Can additional funding be leveraged?

Location

- Are testing locations spread throughout the project area?

Summary of Key Benefits

Through the Council Innovation Fund (CIF), additional funds for *The Future of Stephen Avenue: Activate + Experiment* would allow Urban Initiatives to:

- Make Calgary better - right away! Rather than waiting for the next budget cycle to request capital funds for redevelopment, the project team can make lighter, quicker, cheaper improvements in Q2 2020 through Q2 2022.
- Demonstrate Council's commitment to Calgary's Comeback! By funding short-term improvements to the Avenue, The City will show business owners, property owners, downtown employees, tourists, and citizens at large that Stephen Avenue is an exciting place to be, and is a focal point of economic and social activity in the downtown.
- Leverage CIF funds to encourage investment in the Avenue! Through strategic partnerships forged through Phase 1, The City can collaborate with CDA, property owners, businesses, and groups interested in making Stephen Avenue a premiere urban experience through joint public realm improvements.
- Not only test innovative ideas but measure their impacts and tweak the design! This lean approach to urban design is built upon the proven model of the Lean Startup widely used in entrepreneurship and the tech industry. Prototype test measure pivot is a new standard in business development and has been proven as a successful approach in urban development.

How is the Project Creating Value for the Community?

- Citizens will gain direct experience of proposed changes vs. abstract understanding through renderings and open houses. A prototype is the best form of public engagement!
- Increased social and economic activity along the avenue are clear goals of both Calgary's Comeback and the Downtown Strategy.
- Measure what we care about. By providing quantitative data on the Avenue, Calgarians can clearly comprehend the value and impact of our short-term improvements to the Avenue.
- Increased awareness and transparency for The Future of Stephen Avenue project.
- The experimentation process will minimize long-term risk, help streamline approval processes, and cut red tape as it relates to trying innovative things on the Avenue.

Identify how this project meets the criteria as outlined in the Terms of Reference for the Council Innovation Fund.

Please attach additional information as required.

Refreshing Stephen Avenue fully meets the criteria and intent of the Council Innovation Fund. The proposed pilot project is innovative, meets council priorities, and works to modernize policies and procedures in a way that would impact other projects in Urban Initiatives work program and other areas of the organization. The proposed project will also be sustainable in the long term, fiscally sound and well-managed.

Innovation

The proposed Phase 1a of Stephen Avenue pilots a new method in implementing streetscape master plans and construction projects. This interim phase of 'test, measure, refine' has had demonstrated success in many other municipalities and major public infrastructure projects, but has yet to be employed in Calgary beyond a few small scaled projects.

Why its innovative:

- We will experiment with short term activations and infrastructure to better understand their impact and success, and to ultimately inform long-term infrastructure decisions. Prototyping allows us to collect design intelligence, directly from the market we intend to serve. This will result in an improved product - the streetscape - and lead to greater social interaction along the Avenue.
- Adaptation of the Lean Startup model (a progressive product delivery model utilized in the tech industry with great success) to city building project. The model focuses on rapid prototyping to build a more refined solution than the initial untested concept. Learnings will be carried forward to other Urban Initiatives projects including Main Streets, and available to other City projects. This will result in an improved process.
- “We measure what we care about”. We will be filling the measurement gaps with new tools that can be utilized on other City public space projects. These measurements will quantify impacts of the experiments and activations, and the vitality of Stephen Avenue over time. This work will result in the testing of a new service that can be utilized on other city projects.
- This work will cut red tape and feed into a new governance model that will empower businesses and organizations to take greater ownership over the street. Findings could feed into a new activation model for Downtown and all of Calgary.

Council Priorities

The project is aligned with the Council Priorities listed below.

Prosperous City:

- Support civic, business and community partners, as well as business revitalization zones, to collaborate and attract local and global investment (P3)
- Seek out partnerships with other governments and community partners to achieve community well-being (P5)

A city of inspiring neighbourhoods:

- Provide great public spaces and public realm improvements across the city to foster opportunity for well used public spaces and places for citizen connections and urban vitality (N9)

A city that moves:

- Invest in active transportation infrastructure, including cycling and pedestrian networks as funding becomes available (M4)

A well-run city:

- Be as efficient and effective as possible, reducing costs and focusing on value-for-money. (Key focus areas that relate: Implement improved use of performance measures and benchmarks to inform service planning and service delivery; Enhance business intelligence capabilities to improve facility, product and service decisions) (W2)
- Examine opportunities for alternative service delivery for competitiveness. (key focus area: Examine and enhance alternative service delivery mechanisms where possible, including public-private-partnership (P3) models for delivery and operation) (W3)
- Regularly collaborate and engage citizens to encourage participation in City decision-making, and better communicate the reasons for the decisions (W5)

Impacts on city-wide policies and procedures

- Create a model for major public space projects, where testing and prototyping is undertaken to help determine final long-term design solution.
- Utilization of new measurement tools that could impact the way we as a corporation and municipality design public space and determine success on projects. Traffic engineers have been very successful at determining design based on quantified data. We will build upon this approach, for public spaces.

- Remove barriers and create tools for external organizations to activate public spaces with greater ease.

Viable and Sustainable in the Long Term

- Increase success and longevity of future design solutions.
- Use learnings from activations undertaken in this phase to reduce barriers for external organizations to activate the avenue, increasing vibrancy while at the same time reducing the need for city resources.

Fiscally Sound

- Testing and prototyping ideas before implementing design decisions ensures long term infrastructure improvements are effective.
- Funds will be used to leverage other partnership opportunities, increasing financial capacity of the phase overall.

Well Managed

- Urban Initiatives has a proven track record for fiscal responsibility while delivering projects that have maximum impact.

Outline the proposed timeline for this project, including the final report back date.

The timeline of this work is Q2 2020 to Q2 2022, with a final report back to Council by Q1 2023.

Identify what success looks like, and how it will be measured.

A successful project would result in the following being realized on the final project: an effective and field-tested public realm design; a stronger presence of businesses and institutions contributing to the Avenue; and a robust future governance model.

Success will be measured by the following indicators:

- High quality data captured demonstrating the level of effectiveness of activations and experiments
- Increased users during activations
- Increased activations by external partners (not CDA or City)
- Reduction in approval timelines for activations
- Implementation of tested and refined design solutions within final project

Your personal information is being collected, used and disclosed for the administration and processing of your application for funding under the Council Innovation Fund Project. Your information is collected pursuant to section 33(c) of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("FOIP Act") of Alberta. If you have any questions about the collection, use or disclosure of your personal information, please contact The City of Calgary's Chief Financial Office (#8003), The City of Calgary P.O. Box 2100, Stn. M, Calgary, AB T2P 2M5 and by calling at 403-268-5664.