

Background and Previous Council Direction

The City is responsible for protecting Calgarians' freedom of expression in public places while also protecting the wellbeing of students - often young, vulnerable children - from being unwillingly exposed to advocacy messaging by advocacy groups which can trigger confusion, trauma and emotional harm.

Context

In early 2019, an external interest group targeted a Calgary high school with large advocacy messaging that was graphic in nature. A neighboring elementary school was indirectly impacted by the protest. This incident made the news and initiated citizens calling City councillors expressing their concerns.

On 2019 April 8, Council directed Administration through a Notice of Motion (C2019-0446) to collaborate with Calgary school boards and districts to understand concerns regarding harmful expression around school sites and determine municipal authority to regulate activities on public spaces.

Administration has learned through stakeholder engagement that this is an ongoing issue outside many Calgary high schools. To address this issue, The City must ensure that it is acting within its jurisdiction and recognizes that while freedom of expression is protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a government may impose reasonable restrictions where there is proper justification for doing so.

Previous Council Direction

December 16, 2019

Combined Meeting of Council - School Safe Zones Report
CPS2019-1424

Directed Administration to draft a bylaw to restrict advocacy messaging by external interest groups on public property around schools and report back no later than 2020 Q3.

April 8, 2019

Combined Meeting of Council - School Safe Zones Notice of Motion C2019-0446

Directed Administration to collaborate with Calgary school boards and districts to understand concerns regarding harmful expression around school sites and determine municipal authority to regulate activities on public spaces.

Bylaws, Regulations, Council Policies

None