

BRIEFING

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Item # 5.2.2

**Planning & Development Briefing to
SPC on Planning and Urban Development
2021 June 02**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
PUD2021-0466**

Community Outreach on Planning and Development

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on *The Community Outreach on Planning and Development Toolkit* (the Toolkit) in response to direction that Administration report back to Committee after 12 months (Attachment 1).

The Toolkit, launched in 2019, outlines outreach roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, sets expectations for community outreach and involvement for applications, and provides applicants and community members with information, tools and resources as they lead and participate in local planning and development matters.

Administration has been monitoring the Toolkit on an ongoing basis. It has proven to be well utilized, has been well received, and has enabled a transparent and predictable baseline (for what to expect when it comes to community outreach and involvement on community planning and development matters) to be established. Ongoing efforts to raise awareness, collect feedback and enhance the Toolkit will continue to ensure the Toolkit remains effective and relevant.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The problem

Building a great city involves the entire community—neighbours, community groups, planners, businesses and developers. In the past, it was unclear who should lead community outreach (communications and/or engagement) on land use and development proposals and what should be expected when it came to involving community members.

The solution

The Toolkit ([Calgary.ca/planningoutreach](https://calgary.ca/planningoutreach)) was created based on international outreach best practices and engagement with a range of local stakeholders. In monitoring the Toolkit since 2019, Administration has concluded that The Toolkit has successfully:

- Clarified outreach roles and responsibilities for all stakeholder groups.
- Improved predictability by outlining expectations for community outreach and involvement throughout the planning processes.
- Outlined outreach recommendations and requirements for applicants.
- Provided applicants and citizens with a range of outreach tools and resources; and
- Ensured information is transparent and easily accessible to anyone who is interested or impacted.

The result

Since launching the Toolkit in 2019, ongoing efforts to increase awareness, collect feedback and improve the Toolkit have been a priority.

Since launching, the Toolkit has received an average of 600-800 visits per month with an average time spent within the pages of 2.48 minutes, indicating good viewership and review of information and resources.

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Awareness of the Toolkit has been raised through several City and partner-organization channels and touch points. For example, applicants and citizens are directed to the Toolkit by file managers in connection with specific proposals and applications; the Toolkit is linked from the comment section within Development Maps as well as other relevant Calgary.ca pages; information about the Toolkit has been shared through numerous newsletter articles; a Councillor Toolkit was created and shared; BILD Calgary has a webpage dedicated to the Toolkit and provides ongoing updates to members; the Federation of Calgary Communities also shares information about the Toolkit through their channels; and information about the Toolkit and within the Toolkit is shared with participants attending the Partners in Planning, Community & Citizen Involvement course.

Multiple feedback opportunities for targeted engagement and online surveys have been and will continue to remain open for stakeholders to provide feedback. Feedback response rates have been low, however, feedback received to date has generally been positive, constructive and focused on suggestions for refinement.

With clear community outreach roles and responsibilities and outreach recommendations and requirements in place, many positive outcomes have been realized, such as:

- Reduced City resource expenditures and ongoing cost savings since The City is no longer stepping in to lead outreach on land use redesignations and development permits.
- Applicants have indicated appreciation for clear and predictable City expectations for applicant-led outreach.
- Citizens are provided with consistent information about the baseline for what to expect when it comes to community outreach and involvement on land use and development proposals (e.g. City requirements and recommendations for applicant-led outreach, as well as requirements for City outreach – such as notification, circulation, review of comments and opportunities for public hearing and appeal).
- City resources freed up to assist applicants and communities with other tasks - for applicants, this includes customized outreach advice linked to complex applications and timely responsiveness to changing conditions (such as distanced outreach during the pandemic). For citizens, this includes City involvement in community-based education opportunities such as Partners in Planning, hosted by the Federation of Calgary Communities.
- Requiring applicants to complete the Applicant Outreach Summary places additional accountability on applicants for their outreach approach, aids with intervention at the application submission stage and with reporting to Calgary Planning Commission and Council prior to a decision being rendered.
- Anecdotally, the number of applications that have been sent back by Council for additional outreach or engagement appears to have declined since the launch of the Toolkit.

Since the Toolkit's launch, updates have been made including additional recommendations on distanced outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic, and responding to feedback indicating a need for additional guidance in that area. Additional improvements to site usability and navigation have also been suggested and are currently being explored. Sustainment of and improvements to the toolkits will be ongoing.

An update on the Toolkit was originally scheduled to return to Committee in Q3 2020, but was deferred due to Q2 2021 as part of a broader 2020 June 15 City Clerk's Office Procedural Request for outstanding Committee and Council reports.

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Summary

A clear and predictable approach that supports applicants with community outreach on planning applications and citizens with involvement in all community planning matters has been established. The Toolkit supports a variety of key stakeholders, including citizen/community members, applicants, City Administration and City Council. The education materials, tools and resources available in the Toolkit support applicants and community members as they undertake community outreach and participate in the planning and development of Calgary's communities, leading to better outcomes for all.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Resources for Community Outreach on Planning and Development
3. Letters of Support