

# Resources for Community Outreach on Planning and Development

Building a great city involves the entire community—neighbours, community groups, planners, businesses and developers. In the past, it has been unclear and unpredictable who should lead outreach and when and how the public should be involved in planning decisions. Planning and development decisions happen at different scales. Community outreach on planning decisions can be comprehensive and involve input from a wide range of citizens across the entire city or multiple communities (such as the development of policy plans) or it can be very localized and involve what might be built on a single lot within a community.

## Roles and Responsibilities: Who does what when?

Different roles can apply to different people depending on the type of project (e.g. City-initiated versus landowner/applicant-initiated).

<b>POLICY PLANS (New)</b>	
City Administration	Lead
Community Organizations (Community Associations, Business Improvement Associations, BILD, Federation of Calgary Communities etc.)	Connector & Participant
Community	Participant
Development Industry	Participant
City Council	Decision Maker
<b>APPLICATIONS (Land Use, Outline Plans, Development Permits, Policy Amendments)</b>	
Applicant (person applying for / proposing the change)	Lead
City Administration	Support
Community Organizations (Community Associations, Business Improvement Associations, BILD, Federation of Calgary Communities etc.)	Connector & Participant
Community	Participant
City Council (policy plans & rezoning) / Calgary Planning Commission (Outline Plans & more complex Development Permits) / Development Authority (less complex Development Permits)	Decision Maker

## What's my role? What's your role?

Clarifying community outreach roles and responsibilities connected to planning and development projects helps clarify expectations and increases predictability. Each role, shown below, includes a description and associated responsibilities. As mentioned above, the group connected to each role changes depending on the project type (e.g. Policy Plan versus Land Use of Development Applications).

ROLE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>LEAD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The lead is the initiator or proponent of the project and is the primary decision maker for the project leading up to a formal decision of approval/refusal by the designated City decision-making body.</li> <li>▪ The lead determines if/when community outreach will take place connected to their project and, if so, decides about what, with who, where, how, etc.</li> <li>▪ The lead pays for community outreach costs associated with their project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notify people of the project and any opportunities to learn more or provide input.</li> <li>▪ Determine the negotiables and non-negotiables for the project and what is/isn't open for public input.</li> <li>▪ Communicate the constraints.</li> <li>▪ Clarify the scope of the conversation.</li> <li>▪ Provide clear, concise, transparent and accurate information.</li> <li>▪ Hold a respectful conversation.</li> <li>▪ Report back if/when collecting input.</li> <li>▪ Keep people in the loop and close the loop when decisions are made.</li> <li>▪ Provide City decision makers with a summary of the community outreach approach that was taken.</li> </ul>
<b>SUPPORT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The support assists in the outreach process by providing the lead, the connector and participants with information, tools and resources to improve understanding and aid in the overall success of the outreach process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Share information about City goals and policies.</li> <li>▪ Explain The City's review and decision-making processes.</li> <li>▪ Clarify community outreach roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Create tools and resources for participants, connectors and leads to help them be successful in their outreach roles.</li> </ul>
<b>CONNECTOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The connector shares information and insights about a specific community or area to help increase understanding of the local context and to help inform community outreach plans for local planning and development projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Where possible, share local information and insights to help build understanding and inform outreach plans.</li> <li>▪ Where possible, help raise awareness of opportunities for people to get involved in local planning projects.</li> </ul>

<p><b>PARTICIPANT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The participant participates in the outreach process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek out information and be informed.</li> <li>▪ Listen and participate respectfully.</li> <li>▪ Respect the scope of conversation and project constraints.</li> <li>▪ Provide appropriate feedback and remain open to different ideas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>DECISION MAKER</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The decision maker is responsible for making the final decision to approve/refuse the policy plan or development application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and consider proposed local area plan or development application.</li> <li>▪ Review and consider the outreach strategy/rationale/approach and any feedback that may have been collected.</li> <li>▪ Approve/refuse the local area plan or development application.</li> </ul>

## City Outreach Role

The City is required to notify, advertise and accept comments from the public as per the Municipal Government Act and Land Use Bylaw ahead of planning decisions. At a minimum, this helps ensure citizens are informed about proposed changes connected to land use and development proposals and have opportunities to provide feedback directly to City Administration and/or City Council.

The City informs the community about the application proposal through on-site signage, file circulation, advertisements and by sharing information and collecting feedback. Feedback can be shared online, directly with the file manager or by providing comments to Council through the public hearing process for land use applications.

City Administration can recommend changes to an application based on a variety of factors including: professional expertise, public input, City policies; however, it is ultimately up the applicant to make changes to their application. Once City Administration's application review is complete, City Administration makes a recommendation of approval or refusal.

In addition, The City plays a support role when it comes to community outreach on applications. The City may attend applicant-led sessions to: share information about The City's application review and decision-making process; to provide information about City goals and policies; to share information about specific districts, bylaws, rules or regulations; or to explain where, when and how community members can get involved in planning decisions throughout the planning process. The City has and will continue to enhance information to ensure it is widely available and broadly accessible to help continually increase community awareness and understanding and build community capacity.

In the past, The City would conduct outreach on some applications for reasons that were unclear. Stakeholders indicated that this caused confusion and, as the reviewer of the application, stakeholders

indicated the need for The City to be impartial and balanced rather than appearing to be advocating for the proposed change on behalf of the applicant. As the reviewer and in some cases decision maker (as Development Authority) on applications, City Administration's role should focus on the review of the application as well as supporting increased public understanding of any City policies or other factors that may be considered through the review.

When it comes to the creation of new planning policies, such as local area plans, The City leads community outreach efforts and the level of outreach that is undertaken by The City is formal engagement and is expected to align with The City's Engage Policy.

## Applicant Outreach Role

As the proponent of the proposed change, it was determined that the applicant is in the best position to lead, explain and rationalize their development intentions and proposal. The applicant's role is to: determine, lead and rationalize their approach to community outreach associated with their proposal (across all application types). This may include notifying people about the project and sharing information about the application details; answering questions about the proposal; collecting feedback if/where the applicant has determined decisions may be influenced by the public.

City Administration's general recommended minimum approach is for applicants to complete the Community Outreach Assessment Tool (sample shown on page 5 of 6 below) which helps applicants assess and consider the potential impact of their proposal within the context of the community they are working in. In addition to completing the Community Outreach Assessment Tool, The City recommends connecting with the surrounding neighbours, community association or relevant member-based organizations, and area Councillor early in the process to discuss their development ideas. From there, applicants are likely to gain a better sense of the sentiment of their proposal within the community and can then make a more informed decision about what additional community outreach efforts may be required and/or beneficial. Applicants are asked to submit an Applicant Outreach Summary (sample shown on page 6 of 6 below) to explain what community outreach efforts were undertaken.

Although community outreach is highly encouraged and supporting tools and resources are available to assist with each step in an outreach process, it is ultimately up to applicants to determine if they will undertake outreach (at what level – from inform through to formal engagement and through what approach) or, if they chose not to reach out to the community, they must provide a rationale for why they decided not to connect with stakeholders. To support applicants with their community outreach efforts, the Applicant Outreach Toolkit has been created by The City. This online toolkit provides both applicants and citizens with tools and resources to support community outreach connected to planning and development within Calgary's communities.

Alternatively, mandating individual landowners—or the applicants representing them—to conduct outreach with the community was determined not to be an effective approach as outreach needs can vary across projects and communities. However, as the proponent and decision maker of the details of an application, landowners/applicants are encouraged to be good neighbours and discuss their development intentions with their neighbours.



## Community Outreach Assessment Tool

The City has created this optional assessment tool which is designed to help you navigate the decision to undertake outreach and provides guidance on high-level outreach considerations based on the impact of your proposed project and the community complexity.

When filling this out, it can be helpful to do some initial research into past projects in the area as this will help inform your answers for more accurate results. Also, ensure when you are answering these that you are putting yourself in the shoes of the community. Remember that how you answer today, is reflective of the context of today and isn't a guarantee that no issues will arise in the future as you move through your process.

COMMUNITY IMPACT	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	Enter Values
How similar is your project to what already exists in the community?	Similar projects exist in the community and is a low level of change for community.	Community is not that familiar with this project type and will be a moderate change.	Major change or redevelopment being proposed and likely a big change for the community.	
What is the duration of your project (to occupancy)?	Under 2 years	3 - 5 years	5 + years	
How broadly will this project impact the surrounding community?	Likely to affect immediate neighbours.	Could have an impact within a few blocks.	Likely to have an impact community - wide.	
How common is redevelopment within the community?	Redevelopment is common in community.	Moderate redevelopment has occurred.	Little to no redevelopment has occurred.	
<b>TOTAL</b>				
COMMUNITY COMPLEXITY	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	Enter Values
How do you anticipate the community will react to this project?	Little attention - project unlikely to be a public issue.	Anticipate there will be some attention. Disagreement or differing opinions are expected.	Anticipate this to be a highly sensitive issue.	
How inclined will stakeholders be to accept this project?	Likely minimal to no issues anticipated.	Some issues anticipated.	Many issues are anticipated.	
What level of influence do stakeholders have over project decisions?	No decisions open for input, willing to inform stakeholders of project details.	Willing to listen to stakeholders and learn about their ideas and respond where possible	Willing to collect input to influence specific project decisions.	
<b>TOTAL</b>				

### IMPACT SCORE

4 to 6	1
7 to 9	2
10 to 12	3

### COMPLEXITY SCORE

3 to 5	A
6 to 9	B

COMMUNITY IMPACT	COMMUNITY COMPLEXITY	
	3A	3B
2A	2B	
1A	1B	

Your Project's Score:

Outreach Approach Assessment	
<b>Direct approach</b> (1A, 1B)	Your project is likely of low impact to the community and is not proposing a major change or disruption. For higher complexity, you may have to put a bit more effort in developing content to educate and inform stakeholders about your project details. Consider choosing 2 - 3 tactics suited for a targeted audience*.
<b>Moderate approach</b> (2A, 3A)	Your project is of medium to high impact for the community, but is not very complex and likely little attention and/or issues are expected. Given the level of impact consider expanding your reach beyond the immediate neighbours to inform them of the project details and collect input if needed. Consider choosing 4 - 6 tactics for a range of targeted and broader audiences*.
<b>Comprehensive approach</b> (2B, 3B)	Your project is of medium to high impact for the community, and of higher complexity. There are likely issues that will need to be mitigated and addressed and extra effort will be needed to educate and inform stakeholders about your project. Consider a broader approach with the community and be open to an iterative process with multiple tactics where input could help inform better decisions*.

\*For an overview of outreach tactics and techniques you could consider, click [here](#).

[calgary.ca/planningoutreach](http://calgary.ca/planningoutreach)



## Community Outreach on Planning & Development Applicant-led Outreach Summary

**Please complete this form and include with your application submission.**

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**Project name:**

Did you conduct community outreach on your application?      YES   or   NO

If no, please provide your rationale for why you did not conduct outreach.

### **Outreach Strategy**

Provide an overview of your outreach strategy, summary of tactics and techniques you undertook (Include dates, locations, # of participants and any other relevant details)

### **Stakeholders**

Who did you connect with in your outreach program? List all stakeholder groups you connected with. (Please do not include individual names)

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