Developer Funded Area Structure Plan Evaluation –
Landowner Feedback

Following the completion of the Developer Funded Area Structure Plan (ASP) program, landowners within the six ASP areas were invited to participate in a debriefing session to determine benefits and improvement opportunities of the Developer Funded ASP process. Feedback was also gathered from landowners continually and particularly after each "couplet" of ASPs was completed as part of a commitment to continuous improvement. That way, landowner suggestions were implemented in real time as projects progressed, meaning that the later ASPs incorporated lessons learned from the earlier ASPs.

Generally speaking, landowners were enthusiastic and positive about the ASP program and the quality of results that were achieved through it. However, there were many suggestions made for improvement. The following Attachment summarizes landowner feedback received. Please note that comments provided here are generalized and may not be reflective of all landowners amongst all plan areas.

Major Successes

Landowners expressed many positive comments about the following:

Aspect	Success
Document	The ASP documents were more concise, user-friendly, and visual compared to past ASPs.
Content	Policies within the ASPs were innovative, and due to the collaborative nature of the project, are more implementable than policies that would be developed by The City in isolation.
Timing	ASP was completed and approved on or under time.
Approvals	CPC and Council provided unanimous approvals and were generally very positive about the content in the ASPs.
Process	- The processes were generally highly collaborative, with the goal of moving towards convergence on "one plan" rather than a more adversarial process whereby each party creates their own plan and a process of merging them together has to take place - The projects had a great deal of positive momentum, with a strong emphasis on decision-making and meeting timelines - For the most part, project managers were transparent with information and reasons behind decisions were provided - Better results were achieved through sharing of information and alignment of goals between City staff and developers
Financials	The ASPS were generally completed under budget. Also, we now have an idea of The City's cost to produce an ASP.
Relationship Building	A key "win" of the program was the trust and shared understanding that was built between industry and City staff.

Areas for Improvement

Landowners suggested improvements could be made to aspects of the process, should it be used again. These are organized by theme below.

Project Plan and ASP Funding Model:
- Landowners would go through the process again (process overall was good). It is important to have rapport, trust, and appreciation for aspects of the project.
- The creation of the project plan (or Charter) should have come earlier in the process and with more opportunity for landowner input. This includes the engagement and communication strategies.
- A greater focus on innovation was needed. This would have identified more areas for potential improvements within the process.
- The projects were good value with time and money well spent. The Funding Agreement used by The City worked well to provide parameters of the project processes. However, the "One Funder" approach was not necessarily desired, but understood. The City agreement with "One Funder" passed the administrative burden to the landowners who also accepted the majority of risk. To improve the payment schedule, it would be good to know during the process if the project will come in under budget so final payment can be waived.
- Stakeholder expectations and key result areas should have been outlined and documented using a project management approach, with an aim to achieving consensus.
- The ASPs were executed according to the Funding Agreement and the Terms of Reference. Key milestones were met on time for the most part and expected deliverables were provided by all parties. Landowners felt that other projects and processes undertaken by The City should also have Council mandated deadlines.

Recommended Action: Start the "pre-work" for the ASP earlier to identify opportunities for innovation and stakeholder expectations.

Timelines:
- Overall the timelines were reasonable. However, there were times when processes could have been expedited by condensing internal review periods. At the same time, staff seemed to rush decisions and would use the fact that the timeline was tight in order to rationalize decisions that were contentious.
- Having clearly defined timelines forced issues to be discussed in a timely manner.
- Some landowners felt that more time is needed on the detailed design stage of the project.

Recommended Action: Review and refine timelines for future ASP work (if applicable) with an eye to allowing time for effective decisions to be made while still maintaining efficiency.

Staff
- Overall, staff and in particularly the planners were extremely effective. Landowners felt the process worked because it was lead by the planners. However, some felt that a "strong chair" was needed in more cases where issues needed to be "parked" and discussed in side meetings.
- The Project Manager needed to have more authority and decision-making power.

- Landowners were not always clear if TAC member time was being used efficiently.

Recommended Action: The decision-making process should be clearly spelled out in future ASPs, with decision-makers identified at the outset.

Issue Resolution
- Issues were resolved similarly between the ASP project teams. There were times when landowners perceived there would be delays in the timeline if they pressed issues. This perhaps rushed decision-making processes in some cases. However, there were other cases where discussion of issues took weeks, only to have some departmental positioning relaxed in the end. Landowners recommended that smaller, more intimate group meetings could potentially solve certain issues quicker.
- Once decisions were made, Administration should have avoided revisiting issues. Taking that a step further, when decisions are already made at ASP stage, landowners would like to avoid rehashing the same issue at the Outline Plan stage.
- When considering issue resolution, landowners did not always know what was a "big deal" or a "deal-breaker." Moreover what does resolution of an issue look like? How is the final decision made? When does resolution become satisfactory to all people? Landowners were not sure.
- To keep the project on track, sometimes issues were left to be dealt with at later stages. Landowners felt that staff should avoid deferring issues to Outline Plan / Land Use Amendment stage and instead deal with them at the ASP stage.
- The dispute resolution process should have been clearly spelled out, with the aim of resolving issues prior to going to Calgary Planning Commission.

Recommended Action: A clear dispute resolution process should be spelled out and agreed upon prior to the project launch.

Public Engagement
- Landowners were divided on the level and implementation of the engagement plan. Some felt that the communication and engagement strategies should have been prepared with more landowner input and earlier on in the process. Some landowners also felt the need to reach out to stakeholders they felt should be involved.
- The language used in the engagement strategies (e.g., inform, engage, etc.) did not always play out in reality; the process was much more collaborative than the engagement strategy language. Landowners were surprised at how little the general public is interested in these ASP processes.
- It is important for the general public to know that ASPs must be read in conjunction with the New Community Planning Guidebook.

Recommended Action: Landowners should be involved in the preparation of the engagement plan to take advantage of landowner knowledge of stakeholder needs.

Landowner Engagement
- Early in the process The City should have created and delivered a "Development & Planning 101" session to landowners. Topics could include how Environmental Open Space is delineated, Environmental Reserve considerations, School Board methods for school site determination, etc.
- The use of agendas and minutes for all meetings was important and very useful.

However, minutes could have been improved by outlining the key actions with follow up. A key decision making log would also have been beneficial.

- Meetings with the Project Manager and team at The City were generally effective. The City along with the Landowners' consultant set agendas and ensured the right people were at meetings. Technical meetings held were not as well documented and actions not always adhered to.
- Landowners felt that there was key staff missing at key decision making points in the process. For instance, having Growth Management at the table would have helped with the overlay process. Having specialists (e.g., City-Wide Planning) at meetings would have also saved time as would having more TAC members at landowner meetings.
- It would have been helpful to have more decision-making ability at landowner / City meetings. This could have been achieved by empowering the Project Manager to make faster decisions without having to take information back for consultation and consideration with TAC in all cases.
- The circulation of the minutes and action items needed additional follow-up to ensure TAC members were clear on what is needed between landowner / City meetings.
- The strengths and skills sets of both the Administration and landowner/consultant team should have been utilized more to take advantage of everyone's abilities.
- Landowners felt they knew where to get information. There were defined lines of communication between stakeholders and The City's project team. However, there were times when communication was not always prompt or clear (e.g., need to consistently update the ASP specific website).
- The ASP teams initially took a "one-window" approach to communications whereby the Project Manager acted as gate keeper and information and requests flowed through that one gate. Once relationships were established, subject matter experts from the landowner team and The City team were able to communicate directly without going through the Project Manager. Notwithstanding this direct link, there was a lot of time spent waiting for answers from some departments. Having one lead consultant for the landowners was convenient for The City's project team – this was more of a challenge with a second consultant involved.
- In cases where there was difference of opinion between landowners and technical staff members, there was uncertainty on how much "gate-keeping" the Project Managers wanted to do versus facilitating more direct contact between consultants and Administration. This can be improved upon in subsequent ASP projects.

Recommended Action: TAC members should participate more in landowner meetings to ensure the "right" people are at the table.

Plan Content

- While the focus on this evaluation is on the process, landowners did comment on content of the plans overall. Regarding concept planning phase, landowners questioned the value of deciding on specific school board ownership of joint use sites at the ASP stage. They felt that more certainty of ASP boundaries should come from Council at the start of the project. Pertaining to policy work, there were concerns over lack of City-wide policy on railway setbacks. There was unanimous confusion over Community Activity Centre and Community Retail Centre policy and asked for more clarification between the two for subsequent ASP work. Lastly, Administration should identify the need for supporting studies earlier in the process.
- Given the new approach to the ASP product itself (i.e., with the adoption of the New

Community Planning Guidebook), there was uncertainty of the level of detail needed in the ASP – this took some time to figure out. Not all landowners understood the critical milestones and the technical study requirements and deadlines.

Recommended Action: The City should continually clarify and reinforce the role of the New Community Planning Guidebook with external stakeholders.