

## **Developer Funded Area Structure Plan Evaluation – Technical Advisory Committee Feedback**

Following the completion of the Developer Funded ASP program, evaluation sessions were held with the internal Technical Advisory Committees (TACs). The TACs for each plan consisted of representatives from all relevant City departments, including:

- Planning;
- Transportation Planning;
- Transit;
- Water Resources;
- Calgary Neighbourhoods;
- Growth Management;
- Planning Strategies;
- Fire Department;
- Parks;
- Environmental and Safety Management;
- Law;
- Corporate Properties;
- Recreation; and
- Urban Design.

During the evaluation sessions, TAC members discussed successes from the program and opportunities for improvement should the developer funded approach be used in the future. These comments are generalized and may not be reflective of all TAC members. They are detailed by theme below.

### **Timeline**

TAC generally noted that the project timeline was too aggressive, and this reduced the quality of the end project and rushed decisions. Especially since most of the ASP areas are not expected to develop for many years, TAC felt that the timelines were unnecessarily rushed. At the same time, the tight timelines facilitated enhanced collaboration with external stakeholders whereby landowners and consultants were open to sharing information and data early and often. Having a tighter timeline than usual did keep the project on track and established a positive momentum and a drive to work towards a common goal, but TAC resoundingly felt that an increase in the amount of time to complete the project would be beneficial in the future.

*Recommended Action: Increase project timeline from 12 months for ASP creation to 18 months.*

### **Resourcing**

Ten Planning and Development Staff were dedicated to the creation of the ASPs. In addition over 30 supporting staff members worked (to varying degrees) on the projects from various departments. This allowed for concentrated efforts on these projects. However many staff still had additional workloads which at times conflicted with the work demands of the DFA program.

Staff turnover and corporate reorganization affected the project workload at times. This was mitigated through teamwork by the project planning teams.

*Recommended Action: None.*

## **Landowner Involvement and Collaboration**

The DFA program saw more interaction between TAC members and landowners than is typical. This was universally seen as a positive by TAC. Meeting frequently with the landowners kept TAC involved in the process and in the know about project progress. Traditionally in ASP processes, TAC would establish a position on an issue, and the landowners would establish a position. The two groups would then submit points in favour of their arguments to the planning staff and a resolution would need to be reached without interaction between TAC and the landowners.

With the DFA process, TAC met directly with landowners and this resulted in better exchanging of information and more knowledge on both parties' part regarding constraints.

*Recommended Action: None.*

## **Studies / Consultant Work**

ASPs require a large amount of technical studies as an input, including a Biophysical Inventory and Master Drainage Plan. These studies are typically undertaken by consultants hired by the landowner team. There are many advantages that come with hiring a consultant to undertake these studies. Generally, consultants can complete the work faster and can dedicate a large amount of time to meeting with City staff. However, reviewing consultants' work requires a large amount of time from City staff and The City does not get to select the consultant and verify their qualifications. Generally speaking, all consultant work on the ASPs was of a high quality, but there were a few exceptions and this caused delays and work that needed to be repeated. Perhaps in the future, City staff could be more involved in selecting a qualified consultant and supervising their work.

Some plans did not have all the technical analysis completed prior to approval of the ASP, which was risky for the projects.

*Recommended Action: Key studies should be scoped and started prior to project launch.*

## **Staging of Work**

The six ASPs were undertaken in couplets. For example, Cornerstone and Rangeview ASPs were started at the same time, followed by Haskayne and Nose Creek, and then followed by Glacier Ridge and Providence. Having the six ASPs staged was generally seen as a positive strategy to getting the work done. Concurrent projects resulted in synergies, and lessons learned from the previous projects could be applied to ongoing or future ones. But the staged approach meant that oftentimes staff were working on four ASPs at once, and this became fatiguing after a while and challenging for analysis. For example, two ASPs would need to enter transportation modeling at the same time, and this was taxing on the staff and the analysis programs.

The DFA program included ASPs which had periods of time where the plans were not running at the same pace. Stakeholders (including TAC) found it ideal to keep the plans in sync. There are efficiencies to be had with creating synergies between concurrent projects (e.g., policy work, administrative tasks, cost and schedule procedures, etc.). It is recommended that concurrent plans aim to have a project schedule in sync.

*Recommended Action: None.*

## **Public Interest and Bias**

At the outset of the project, there was some concern amongst TAC members that there was the potential for a conflict of interest in the DFA process. TAC members felt that their job was to advocate for the public interest, and by having developers fund their work on a project, they were concerned that this would open up the possibility for bias in favour of the paying developer.

However, final decisions were ultimately made by The City. The plans were created internally (with extensive collaboration with landowners) and consideration was given to the viewpoints and inputs of all internal and external stakeholders.

*Recommended Action: None.*

## **Decision Making Process**

ASP development has many layers and technical considerations, and not all issues can be resolved at the TAC staff level. During the ASP process, various disciplines oftentimes have competing objectives and decision-making needs to reflect a more global, corporate approach. A clearer escalation and decision making process would have been helpful to achieve resolution on issues faster.

*Recommended Action: Use a decision log and have a clearer escalation process.*

## **Meeting Frequency**

The frequent meeting schedule facilitated a lot of interaction between TAC, landowners and consultants, and this helped Administration communicate with the intention of understanding each others' interests and constraints. The process was responsive to dealing with issues when they arose. There were several check points for asking "how is this working/did this work" and in general the impression "we are all in this together and learning as we go" was conveyed.

*Recommended Action: None.*

## **Technological Resources**

TAC members felt that they would have benefitted from having advanced analysis tools and software. Landowners and private consultants oftentimes had access to analysis tools that City staff did not, and so TAC was not able to perform the same level of analysis as consultants. This hampered decision-making.

*Recommended Action: Provide a budget for advanced analysis tools for TAC members.*