

## **MAIN STREETS INITIATIVE - PHASE 1 SUMMARY REPORT**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Calgary's main streets are prime locations to provide mixed-use development supported by high quality multi-modal transportation systems. This type of development is key to successfully implement the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP). The Main Streets Initiative is examining the 24 Main Street areas identified as neighbourhood and urban corridors in the MDP within the built area of the city.

The initiative is a three phase program that will enable and guide redevelopment to continually improve Calgary's main streets. Phase 1 has been completed and this report reviews the results of the first phase and provides more detail for the second phase of the initiative. This first phase focused on listening and learning from main street area residents, business owners, landowners and other users. In addition to collecting issues, opportunities and desired outcomes, research specific to main street areas has been started and multi-departmental opportunities for further implementation have been identified. This phase of the program has included in depth discussion with thousands of Calgarians and started dialogue with interested groups, such as the development industry and business organizations.

### **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the SPC on Planning and Urban Development recommend Council receive this report plan for information.

### **RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2015 SEPTEMBER 09:**

That the Administration Recommendation contained in Report PUD2015-0638 be approved.

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

At the 2014 May 26 meeting of Council Administration's recommendation to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development was approved (PUD2014-0312), moved by Councillor Chabot, Seconded by Councillor Sutherland. Approval of PUD2014-0312 provided project funding and a project charter for the Main Streets Initiative.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Main Streets Initiative has three phases with the project charter providing Council the opportunity to review progress of the project at the end of each phase. Phase 1 focused on learning and understanding by collecting the issues, opportunities and outcomes from stakeholders and the start of analysis and research. Phase 2 will complete analysis, evaluation and report back on Phase 1 stakeholder input to inform potential solutions and provide a framework for implementation. Phase 3 will provide specific implementation actions along with an ongoing monitoring plan (Attachment 1).

The MDP identifies 14 land use typologies across Calgary, five of these typologies (Centre City, Major Activity Centres, Community Activity Centres, Urban Corridors and Neighbourhood Corridors) are intended to be the major growth areas for the next 60 years within the current built area of the city. These five strategic growth areas have integrated policies within the MDP

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and CTP to provide opportunities for more jobs and housing with a full range of land uses to provide a high quality urban life style.

The MDP identifies 24 corridors; 8 Urban Corridors and 16 Neighbourhood Corridors. These corridors provide commercial services, housing, recreation and important transportation links to the adjacent 68 communities. This will be the first project since approval of the MDP that will produce a comprehensive city wide approach to implementation of a singular MDP typology. The Centre City has a comprehensive set of policies, but most were approved by Council prior to the approval of the MDP. The Main Streets initiative will focus on implementation approaches and programs to enable the policies, goals and targets contained in the MDP, rather than creating new local area plans, such as an Area Redevelopment Plan, for every corridor.

### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

#### Summer Pilot Project - June 2014 to September 2014

Council approved the Main Streets initiative 2014 May 26 that required a report to the nextCITY Committee in 2014 September. During the summer, the Main Streets planning team developed a test pilot process for stakeholder engagement and set parameters for an initial scope for economic and market analysis. Three main streets were selected for this pilot with the results discussed at the nextCITY Committee 2014 September 11. The Committee supported the method and approaches of the summer pilot project. These approaches were further refined and a detailed engagement and communication plan was created for all 24 main streets.

#### Main Street Initiative Launch - November 2014

A project launch was held 2014 November 18 to engage the diverse variety of stakeholders that have an interest in the evolution of main street areas. All Business Revitalization Zones and all Community Association executives within or adjacent to a main street; along with developers and builders and variety of other interest groups were invited to this event. The focus was on dialogue and discussion about the future of main street areas and upcoming public engagement opportunities. A new website was also launched which provided discussion tools for stakeholder input.

#### Main Streets Workshops - November 2014 to February 2015

A series of facilitated workshops were held from 2014 November to 2015 February. The workshops provided all main street stakeholders the ability for facilitated discussion with their neighbours, business owners, builders and land owners, supported by a variety of specialists from multiple City of Calgary business units. The event collected issues, opportunities and outcomes for most main street areas. All comments were collected, sorted, grouped and themed. In total over 3,500 comments were received and over 500 persons attended the workshop sessions.

#### Main Streets Online Mapping Exercise - December 2014 to March 2015

An online version of the workshop mapping exercise allowed Calgarians to continue the conversation online. Additional comments, ideas and suggestions were collected, sorted, grouped and themed to be further reviewed with the compiled workshop comments.

#### Main Streets Online Surveys - March 2015 to April 2015

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Over 600 completed surveys were reviewed to clarify main streets specific topics and questions raised from input collected at workshops and online. Online surveys were targeted to people living or working near main street areas.

### Main Streets Information Sessions and Online Engagement - April to May 2015

All comments from the workshops and online engagement activities were collected and compiled. Any comment that occurred more than once was provided for discussion at the follow up information sessions. Stakeholders at the information sessions were asked to rank and prioritize these comments using a set number of coloured dots. This “dotmocracy” exercise allowed participants to rank their top six comments that they agreed with, and the top six they did not. The opportunity for ranking was also provided on the project web site. The top 12 issues and opportunities are provided on the Local Viewpoint Maps, the top outcomes were grouped into logical themes with the top three themes provided on the map.

### Analysis, Research, Best Practice Review, Dialogue - May 2014 to May 2016

The MDP has established a desired intensity level for the 24 main street areas, a minimum intensity goal expressed in jobs and population per hectare. The minimum target for Urban Corridors is 200 jobs and population per hectare and for Neighbourhood Corridors are 100 jobs and population per hectare. A detailed analysis and understanding of the current intensity levels, and the potential development achievable under current land use districts, within all 24 main streets areas was performed. This data is provided in the Main Street Profiles and will be used to inform approaches to reach future goals in Phase 2.

Market demand analysis for growth of residential, office and retail inventory in the 24 main streets will completed in Phase 2. This market research will also include an assessment of triggers required for redevelopment to occur for a variety of uses; for example, what level of local population is required for a neighbourhood grocery store. Understanding market demand across the city, for all main street areas, will inform regulatory solutions to addresses the desired community outcomes and goals of the MDP.

An analysis of demographic trends surrounding main street areas was completed and benchmarks for monitoring planning application trends have been determined; also to support new work to be completed in Phases 2 and 3. Best practice research from a variety of municipalities is ongoing.

During the stakeholder engagement many City departments and business units provided advice and expertise to the engagement process; Transportation, Transit, Parks, Recreation, Office of Land Servicing and Housing, Corporate Properties, Water Resources, etc. These corporate partners will continue to provide more assistance to better align land use planning approaches to existing and future programs across the corporation. A developer and builder stakeholder working group has been established to provide industry concerns, concepts and ideas for achievement of MDP goals in the main street areas.

Urban Design and Heritage Planning has provided advice and expertise to the public engagement process and setting objectives for Main Streets initiative. The Heritage Planning

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section is currently undertaking a high level inventory of areas surrounding most of the main streets areas. This information, along with stakeholder input, will help identify areas of concern. With funding from the Main Street initiative, Heritage Planning hired consultants to complete Statements of Significance for 12 of the main street areas. Findings from these studies will inform future work in Phases 2 and 3.

### MDP Review of Boundaries and New Corridor Criteria

MDP maps, and related CTP maps, provide generalized boundaries for the 24 identified corridors. The maps were meant to describe a general area for the implementation of the related policies. A specific line or boundary was not the intent of the MDP maps, specific projects or programs, such as the Main Streets initiative, were meant to review any required boundaries. During the Main Streets information sessions, stakeholders were asked to mark areas surrounding the main street appropriate for change, areas better suited for stability and the level of growth or development, described by building form and height. Potential local boundary lines for the main streets have been created and are shown on each main street Local Viewpoint Map. These preliminary lines for the main street areas will be further discussed at future stakeholder engagement events and potentially refined in light of ongoing economic and market analysis.

### Local Viewpoint Maps - Tool for all Stakeholders

Based on stakeholder engagement, Local Viewpoint Maps have been created for 20 of the main streets areas. Six of the longer main streets have smaller divisions provided along the corridor. The maps reflect the most common occurring comments for issues and opportunities and desired outcomes within a main street area. The issues, opportunities, and outcomes are ranked in order of occurrence and consensus. The primary function of these maps is to inform the Main Streets initiative of needs, desires and wishes of stakeholders in each unique main street area; and to work towards solutions informed by this input, integrated with an approach that achieves the MDP goals for urban and neighbourhood corridors. This input will be reviewed by other departments and business units to inform their programs and projects. The maps also include a preliminary boundary of the local main street areas, based on input from stakeholders at the spring information sessions. The local viewpoint maps and these draft boundaries will be shared with stakeholders for further discussion in 2016.

In the immediate term, the Local Viewpoint Maps can assist City of Calgary planning staff, and other departments, with understanding the local context surrounding the main street areas. Developers and builders can use the maps to understand local issues and help communities reach their desired outcomes with proposals along any of the main streets. Local residents can see their concerns and solutions in the maps, and use the maps as a point of reference when collaborating on new development proposals.

There is potential for this process, which gathers, ranks, prioritizes and maps issues, opportunities and outcomes from stakeholders, to be used in other projects separate from the Main Streets initiative. As these maps are used in the short term, opportunities for expanding the use of this process will be explored.

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### Main Street Profiles

The MDP has established a long term goal for growth in the 24 main streets areas. An analysis and understanding of the current intensity levels, and the potential intensity achievable under current land use districts, within all 24 main streets areas was performed. A summary of this data is provided in the Main Streets Profiles. These profiles also include the amount of commercial floor space, number of dwelling units, population and jobs. General demographic and mobility usage levels are also provided. This is intended to be a draft version that will be further refined with more discussion with stakeholders about how these profiles can provide useful and relevant information, particularly in terms of local economic development.

### Phase Two Project Plan

From 2015 October to 2016 May, the Main Streets initiative will build on the first phase work by undertaking more detailed economic and planning analysis, including a review of the land use bylaw and MDP, with a goal of creating a framework for implementation in the main street areas. Analysis will lead to a ranking and prioritization of the main street areas with recommendations for action in priority areas at the end of Phase 2.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

The focus of Phase 1 of the Main Streets initiative was stakeholder discussion and public engagement. There were 5 public engagement opportunities for each main street area. This resulted in 1,335 hours of discussion and 4,112 comments provided by over 2,200 Calgarians at events and online. As well, the Main Streets team presented project details at 20 meetings to community associations, business revitalization zones and other groups. More detail is provided in the Engagement Summary (Attachment 2).

The success of the Main Streets engagement has created positive and productive conversations along many of the stakeholders. Citizens have communicated to the Main Streets team that the engagement process has created an increased interest and following of many civic matters, not just an increased interest in planning related issues.

### **Strategic Alignment**

The Main Streets initiative focuses on implementation of MDP outcomes along the neighbourhood and urban corridors within the built area of the city. The MDP and CTP aim to build a city in which people have more choices in where to live and how to travel. Calgarians will be able to choose from a variety of housing types and communities in which to live. The ability to easily reach their destinations or connect with other travel modes will increase because the city will have a variety of convenient mobility options available. People of varying ages, incomes, interests and lifestyles will be able to meet their daily needs more easily. The City will be able to maintain a sustainable municipal financial system and provide quality services for current and future Calgarians, while protecting the natural environment and supporting a prosperous and competitive economy.

To achieve the 60-year outcomes of the MDP and CTP, a 50-50 balance of cumulative growth between established and greenfield communities is required. This means an incremental, continuous shift of where the city grows. Facilitating development in the Centre City, Activity Centres and Corridors will help achieve this goal. By creating more choice in housing, making

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daily needs more accessible to more people, walking, cycling and transit can become convenient choices for more Calgarians. The need for the city to grow more in strategic areas can also be linked to achieving a better balance between population and jobs. Unbalanced job and population growth will create more mobility challenges in the future, as people need to leave their neighbourhoods and commute to their work places.

Dialogue with several City departments and business units has mainly supported the public engagement process. Comments and concerns have been shared with several corporate projects. Several key projects from other departments have an extensive discussion with the Main Street team, with a sharing of public comments. Key corporate projects include; Green Line South East, Pedestrian Strategy, the 17 Avenue South Reconstruction, Macleod Trail Corridor Study and "This is my Neighbourhood Project".

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

Great communities are adaptable to the needs of current and future residents. Communities that provide a broad range of housing choices and commercial services, supported by high quality transit and transportation choices, allow people to meet their day-to-day needs within their own neighbourhood. A variety of transportation network options across the city, along with a more diverse built form, provides for adaptability and flexibility of the built environment over the long term. This diversity provides more options and likely better access for housing, recreation and commercial services for most Calgarians.

More sustainable transportation options such as walking, cycling and transit create a transportation system that provides more choice. Promoting great public spaces, low-impact designs for storm-water management, green buildings, cycling and walking, all work together to make Calgary more environmentally friendly.

In economic terms, the Main Streets initiative represents a strategic approach to land use intended to enable the supply of housing and employment space to keep pace with significant demand. Supporting such supply increases in places with existing and planned infrastructure is a key component in reducing the fiscal impact of growth, while also acting to attenuate pressure on housing affordability.

The success of the public engagement of Phase 1 was that it created more awareness and interest in the development along main streets, with more and more Calgarians vested in creating great communities supported by the main streets.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### **Current and Future Operating Budget:**

Not applicable.

#### **Current and Future Capital Budget:**

Not applicable.

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### **Risk Assessment**

The Corridor Program Project Plan, now titled the Main Street Initiative approved by Council (PUD2014-0312) provided a Project Risk Register. These risks have been mitigated by a successful engagement program, persistence to project plan goals and ongoing support by senior management. Risks will continue to be identified and managed through the next phases of the project.

### **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

The Main Streets Initiative has achieved the intended results for Phase 1 and will attain the program results as approved by Council in 2014 for Phases 2 and 3. This report is for information as the project is accomplishing milestones and successes as detailed in the original Council approval.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Summary Project Plan for Phases 2 and 3
2. Engagement Summary
3. Main Street Location Map