

Background and Previous Council Direction

Background

Since its first meeting in 2019, the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) has worked to open the lines of communication between Calgary's business community and the City of Calgary to facilitate a more collaborative relationship. By consulting with a Working Group that consists of representatives from a variety of business sectors, the BAC has provided advice to Administration that has led to improvements in how The City meets and responds to the needs of the business community. This advice is largely gathered both through regular meetings and through confidential whiteboarding sessions where members of the Working Group and other invited guests share their experiences and suggestions. This feedback is then compiled into What We Heard reports that are presented to the BAC and to Council for further direction. These What We Heard reports have resulted in some significant improvements to how The City meets the need of the business community. For example, the Business Experience Representative program was piloted to great success through 2021 and has now become a permanent program, guiding new restaurant and brewery owners through the business licensing process, saving them both time and money. There are plans in place to expand it to other industry sectors such as indoor agriculture, and other complex areas as resources allow.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the priorities of businesses here and around the world. Throughout 2020 and 2021 The City introduced initiatives such as the Patio Program, Business License Fee Waiver, the Hotel/Motel Tax Deferral, the Reopening Grant Program, and the Restrictions Exemption Program Business Grant. All these programs were designed to assist businesses through a period of extreme unpredictability. Although most restrictions were lifted in March 2022, residual impacts of the pandemic such as protests that impede access to businesses and increased social disorder are still occurring. Furthermore, many businesses are still trying to recover from the financial impacts of the past two years and adjusting to new patterns of consumer behaviour.

Following the Civic Election in October 2021, a new Chair was appointed to the BAC. As its first course of business, the BAC undertook an exercise to determine the Committee's priorities for action in this new post-restrictions environment. Members of the BAC Working Group and the BAC Task Force (formerly the Business Sector Task Force) provided input through meetings and confidential whiteboarding sessions as to the issues that they felt that The City needed to address to ensure a healthy business environment and what types of actions they should prioritize through 2022-2023.

The BAC's 2022-2023 Priorities What We Heard Report (What We Heard Report) identifies several opportunities to address perceived systemic barriers in City processes. These opportunities are prioritized across a one-year period over 2022-2023 and fall into four focus areas:

1. Supporting Calgary's Downtown Strategy
2. Red tape reduction
3. Improving customer service practices at The City (Business-friendly)
4. Advocacy

Detailed findings on barriers in these four areas of focus and the recommended scope of action to address them can be found in table 1 of What We Heard Report, which is Attachment 4 of the BAC Update to Council (BAC2022-0518).

Previous Council Direction

The Business Advisory Committee Q4 2019 – Q1 2020 Timeline and Work Plan and the amended Terms of Reference (BAC2019-1193) were approved at the 2019 September 30 Combined Meeting of Council. The Work Plan identified several opportunities to prioritize perceived system barriers. Three priorities were identified: Restaurants and Breweries, Change of Use, and Industrial Land.

At the Combined Meeting of Council on 2019 June 17, Council directed the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) to review Report PFC2019-0384, which further detailed the Social Procurement Pilot project concepts, application by other municipalities, along with an implementation work plan strategy for The City to consider. For further analysis of the report, Council requested BAC provide an opinion with respect to the Social Procurement Pilot project relative to The City and the continuance of the initiative. The Business Advisory Committee provided an opinion on Social Procurement (BAC2019 -1524) at the Combined Meeting of Council 2019 December 16.

At the Combined Meeting of Council on 2021 March 1, Council approved \$30 million (\$8 million from the originally approved 2021 property tax rebate and \$22 million from the Fiscal Stability Reserve) for direct relief to businesses impacted by COVID-19. Council directed Administration, through the COFLEX program, with input from the Business Advisory Committee, to develop options for how best to deploy these funds. BAC provided input (C2021-0422) at the Combined Meeting of Council 2021 March 22.

At the Combined Meeting of Council on 2021 May 31, Council adopted a Motion Arising with respect to Report C2021-0725 that directed the Business Advisory Committee to continue to conduct consultations with different sectors of businesses including personal wellness services and continue to bring opportunities for support to Council.

At the Combined Meeting of Council on 2021 July 5, Council received the Business Advisory Committee report BAC2021-0956 for the Corporate Record. The report contained proposed amendments to the Business Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference to establish the Business Sector Task Force as a subcommittee of the BAC, but these amendments were neither debated nor adopted. The report also contained a timeline of the BAC's completed work plan for 2018 through 2021 and noted that the BAC continues to work with Administration to improve the Change of Use process.

At the Combined Meeting of Council on 2021 December 20, Council directed Administration to consult with business owners through the Business Advisory Committee to develop specific criteria for dogwalker permits to be issued under Bylaw 75M2021 (Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw).

At the Combined Meeting of Council on 2022 May 10, Council received the Business Advisory Committee Update to Council (BAC2022-0518) and adopted the amended Business Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference. The report included an update on the Business Advisory Committee's priority areas for 2022-2023. The BAC's 2022-2023 Priorities What We Heard Report identifies several opportunities to address perceived systemic barriers in City processes. These opportunities are prioritized across a one-year period over 2022-2023 and fall into four focus areas:

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Update to Council (BAC2022-0518). The report also directed the Business and Local Economy team to work with Planning and Development and report back to the Business Advisory Committee on focus areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 identified in the What We Heard Report by the end of 2022 Q3.

DATE	REPORT NUMBER	DIRECTION/DESCRIPTION
2022 May 10	BAC2022-0518	Business Advisory Committee Update to Council Council adopted the amended Business Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference. The report also directed the Business and Local Economy team to work with Planning and Development and report back to the Business Advisory Committee on focus areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 identified in the "What We Heard" report by the end of 2022 Q3.
2021 December 20	CD2021-1664	Professional Dog Walker Permit within the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw Council directed Administration to consult with business owners through the Business Advisory Committee to develop specific criteria for dogwalker permits to be issued under Bylaw 75M2021 (Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw).
2021 July 05	BAC2021-0956	Business Advisory Committee Update to Council Council received this report for the Corporate Record.
2021 May 31	C2021-0725	Additional Options for Targeted Relief to Business Impacted by COVID-19 Council adopted a Motion Arising with respect to Report C2021-0725 that directed the Business Advisory Committee to continue to conduct consultations with different sectors of businesses including personal wellness services and continue to bring opportunities for support to Council.
2021 March 01	C2021-0422	Options for Targeted Relief to Business Impacted by COVID-19 Council approved \$30M for direct relief to businesses impacted by COVID-19. Council directed Administration, through the COFLEX program, with input from the Business Advisory Committee, to develop options for how best to deploy these funds.
2019 December 16	BAC2019-1524	Business Advisory Committee Opinion on Social Procurement Council approved the Business Advisory Committee opinion on Social Procurement, 1) Continue with the Social Procurement Pilot project as considered in Report PFC2019-0384, 2) Reduce the number of pilot projects to two; and 3) Change the name of the Policy from Social Procurement Policy to Benefit Driven Procurement Policy.
2019 September 30	BAC2019-1193	Business Advisory Committee Update to Council Council approved the Business Advisory Committee Timeline and Work Plan and amended Terms of Reference.
2019 June 17	PFC2019-0384	Social Procurement Policy Implementation Council adopted, through a Motion Arising, "that Council request the Business Advisory Committee to consider

Report PFC2019-0384 and provide an opinion to Council no later than Q4 2019”, which further detailed the Social Procurement Pilot project concepts, application by other municipalities, along with an implementation work plan strategy for The City to consider. For further analysis of the report, Council requested BAC provide an opinion with respect to the Social Procurement Pilot project relative to The City and continuance of the initiative.