

Transition to Online Advertising for Planning Matters

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Infrastructure and Planning Committee recommend that Council:

Give three readings to the proposed Bylaw to Authorize Online Advertising for Planning Matters (Attachment 1).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Administration is seeking Council approval to transition the advertisement of Planning Matters in The Calgary Herald to advertisement online at Calgary.ca to i) save approximately \$114,000 per year, ii) increase awareness of Public Hearings, and iii) minimize The City's environmental footprint.
- Administration's recommendation involves reallocating a portion of the present advertising budget to alternate methods of advertising that can reach a wide variety of Calgarians.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** Calgarians will no longer need to access The Calgary Herald to review the Planning Matters agenda for Public Hearings of Council. Online advertising provides more opportunities to be inclusive of a diverse audience.
- **Why does this matter?** The City of Calgary's website, Calgary.ca, has become the primary source of information related to municipal affairs, including planning and development. As such, the municipal website has become the most effective medium for delivering public notices at a reduced cost while reaching a more diverse audience than The Calgary Herald's readership. There is no previous Council direction regarding this report.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A well-run city

DISCUSSION

Administration's recommendation to transition the advertisement of Planning Matters in The Calgary Herald to advertisement online at Calgary.ca closely follows Council's recent approvals of Online Advertising – Public Works Notices, Property Tax Sale and Annual Report (PFC2021-0503) and Public Hearing Process Improvements – Recommended Approaches (EC2022-0328), in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

Presently, advertising of Planning Matters is required in a newspaper as per Section 606(2) of the Municipal Government Act (MGA). However, Section 606.1(1) of the MGA authorizes Council to, by bylaw, provide for electronic means of advertising Planning Matters where Council is satisfied that the method provided in the proposed bylaw is likely to bring things required to be advertised under Part 17 of the MGA to the attention of affected residents. Administration is confident that the proposed method of advertising Planning Matters on Calgary.ca, supplemented by a rigorous communications campaign, will increase awareness and accessibility of Planning Matters brought to Public Hearings of Council.

The proposed wording for a Bylaw to Authorize Online Advertising for Planning Matters is included as Attachment 1.

If the proposed bylaw is approved, Administration will i) promptly begin advertising Planning Matters on Calgary.ca, ii) implement a robust Communications Strategy (Attachment 2) that

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would advise Calgarians on how to access information on Planning Matters, and iii) continue to run advertisements in the physical and digital copies of The Calgary Herald through to the end of 2022, at which point the advertisements would direct readers to Calgary.ca until 2023 May.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

The public was informed of the proposed advertising transition by email and newsletter in 2022 August. Further communications are planned for 2022 September, prior to the public hearing of Council. If the proposed transition to online advertising for Planning Matters is approved by Council, additional communications are proposed to be undertaken via organic social media, email and newsletter as per the attached Communications Strategy.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

By reallocating a portion of advertising costs presently paid to The Calgary Herald to alternate methods of advertising that can reach a wide variety of Calgarians (multicultural advertising, community associations, online advertisements), The City will foster a more equitable, diverse, inclusive and accessible planning process.

Environmental

Discontinuing advertising of Planning Matters in the printed form will reduce paper waste.

Economic

Adoption of the proposed bylaw promotes fiscal responsibility by reducing advertising expenses and streamlining the advertising process.

Service and Financial Implications

Cost savings

The City currently spends approximately \$200,000 per year on advertising for Planning Matters (Attachment 3). Administration will reallocate a portion of the advertising budget in 2023 towards different communication methods, generating significant cost savings.

RISK

It is likely that there will be some Calgarians that do not use digital media who will be frustrated by the change. Any impact from this will be mitigated by implementing a fulsome communications plan.

Switching to online advertising is likely to engage more Calgarians in Planning Matters, which is consistent with one of Council's guiding principles from Resilient Calgary: Council's Strategic Direction 2023-2026, which is to Strengthen relationships with Calgarians.

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2022 September 9**

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The risk of not completing this work is continuing to spend approximately \$200,000 per year on advertising for Planning Matters that excludes the growing population of Calgarians who prefer digital media over print media.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Wording for a Bylaw to Authorize Online Advertising for Planning Matters
2. Communications Strategy
3. Calgary Herald Advertising Costs 2018-2022
4. Proposed Advertising Layout for Calgary.ca

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Stuart Dalgleish	Planning and Development Services	Approve
Jill Floen	Law	Consult