Detailed Description of Processes for Encouraging Economic Investments

Financial Incentives

1.1 Property Tax Incentives Framework

Description

In July 2021, Council adopted a framework to provide guidance when considering the use of property tax incentives pursuant to MGA Section 364.2 (previously known as Bill 7).

The framework outlines principles to be considered when enacting a program to use property tax incentives.

Corresponding report: IGA2021-0823.

Communication and Coordination

As this tool has never been used, there is no established process for coordination and communication.

Financial Incentives

1.2 Downtown Calgary Development Incentive Program

Description

City Council committed a $100 million investment in the Downtown Calgary Development Incentive Program that is focused on supporting Downtown building owners in the conversion of vacant office space to residential uses.

The program offers a grant for office to residential conversions of $75 per square foot, based on the original gross building area of existing office space that will be converted. Grants are available up to a maximum of $10 million per property under Administration approval. Any requests in excess of $10 million require Council approval for a particular application.

Communication and Coordination

- The City launched an Expression of Interest for Phase 2 of the program that is now closed and is working on the development of future phases of the program. Phase 2 expands focus of the program beyond solely residential use to consider other types of office conversion.
- Over $70 million has been already committed through Phase 1. The five approved projects will remove approximately 665,000 square feet of office space from the market and create 707 homes.

Financial Incentives

1.3 City Centre Enterprise and Main Streets Exemption Areas - Development Permit Exemption

Description

Exemption areas allow for select changes to a business or a building without development permit.

Communication and Coordination

- The program is advertised on Calgary.ca and businesses can contact Planning Services Centre for more information.

Financial Incentives

1.4 Targeted fees relief

Description

Throughout the pandemic The City waived various fees to support businesses in Calgary. The business licence fees have been waived until March 16, 2023 and seasonal outdoor patio fees were waived again in 2022 and 2023.

Communication and Coordination

- Decisions to waive fees have been supported by Council and have been widely advertised.
- Internal coordination of such processes includes cross-corporate engagement and extensive analysis of financial implications.

Financial Incentives

1.5 Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF)

Description

OCIF is a wholly owned subsidiary of The City of Calgary that is governed by an independent Board of Directors and administered by Calgary Economic Development. The fund was created with $100 million from The City's existing reserve. It was created as a catalyst to attract investment, drive innovation, and spur transformative economic development in the city. OCIF has made a wide range of public and private investments that drive economic growth, job creation, and ecosystem development, positioning Calgary to lead digital transformation across our key sectors.

Communication and Coordination

- The fund is coordinated and advertised externally.
- The Board of OCIF provides an annual report to Council.

Financial Incentives

1.6 Industrial Grant – on hold

Description

In the first half of 2022, the Business and Local Economy team worked with internal stakeholders to revisit the proposal for a grant program to encourage industrial investment. After clarifying the grant's purpose and design and engaging with Industrial Strategy Working Group to gain feedback, the plan to move forward with an Industrial Grant program has been put on hold.

Communication and Coordination

- Not Applicable

Business Experience

2.1 Business Experience Representative Program

Description

ISC:UNRESTRICTED

Using feedback from ongoing work with local industry, The City identified opportunities to enhance customer service for complex licence types (i.e., restaurants and breweries) who are opening or growing their business, providing them with consistency and predictability for service, and reduced permitting and licensing timelines.

The City adopted the Business Experience Representatives service as a normal business practice to provide the customer with consistent support throughout their entire journey and to guide customers through the permit and licence processes. This includes discussing and assisting with any documentation requirements. Assisting customers closely throughout this journey also allows for the identification and mitigation (or elimination) of additional barriers.

The Business Experience Representatives service will be expanded to support approvals navigation for more business sectors.

Communication and Coordination

- The program is advertised and is linked to on various Calgary.ca sites including the Business Web Hub, Calgary.ca/business.
- As part of day-to-day operations, the Business Experience Representatives Program maintains cross-corporate relationships with colleagues in Business & Local Economy, members of the 'Open4Business' committee, Calgary Fire, Business Safety, and other business units as needed.

Business Experience

2.2 Film Friendly Strategy

Description

Arts & Culture worked with the Business and Local Economy team to support creation of the Film Friendly strategy and is leading cross-corporate efforts to make it easier for production companies to film in Calgary and to increase internal capacity to respond to permit requests. The outcome of this collaboration will be the establishment of a Film Office team that will provide support to production companies and work with internal groups to continually improve permit and license processes, and support Calgary Economic Development in reporting on Calgary's Film industry.

Communication and Coordination

- There has been a lot of media attention to increased filming in Calgary. Mayor Gondek has been vocal about inviting more production companies to Calgary.
- Coordination of internal efforts has been happening through temporary resources from Arts & Culture and BLE until resources are available to appropriately address the surge in film related permit applications.

Business Experience

2.3 Pre-application enquiries for development permits, land use amendments and outline plans
Description

A pre-application enquiry is a voluntary process where a prospective applicant may present a development proposal to The City for review and comment, prior to a formal application being

submitted. This provides the applicant with an opportunity to receive feedback and address issues prior to applying. This service is provided free of charge.

Communication and Coordination

- The service is advertised on the web and could be booked through the Planning Services Centre. Customers need to request it; it is not offered as an option.
- The information provided by the applicant informs The City's response to the pre-application enquiry and The City's advice can become required information at the development permit stage.

Business Experience

2.4 Development Approval Review Team

Description

Development Applications Review Team (DART) is a cross-corporate team that reviews multi-disciplinary development permit applications, land use amendments, outline plans, pre-application enquiries and provides applicants with feedback and comments. DART eliminates the need for the applicant to seek comments and approval from different City departments and provides a consistent review process with predictable timelines.

Communication and Coordination

- DART coordinates applications and provides predictable timelines for planning applications.
- DART enables broad outcome-focused and collaborative decision-making, while recognizing the scale and technical complexity of the projects they review

Business Experience

2.5 Web hub for businesses: Calgary.ca/business

Description

Calgary.ca/business is a one stop web hub for businesses to find information about permits and licensing, grants, and other support programs available in Calgary. The website was updated in Q3 2022 and is aligned with web pages across the corporation.

Communication and Coordination

- Business and Local Economy team has worked with Communication Services to ensure up to date and relevant information on the site.

Business Experience

2.6 Business Improvement Areas (BIA) team

Description

To facilitate legislatively mandated processes and ensure a collaborative approach, The City's Major Partners division provides direct, tailored support to BIAs through a team of two FTEs. As part of the ongoing efforts to support BIAs, the "BIA Dashboard", a new interactive map and dashboard tool was recently launched which can be used by BIAs and businesses for

establishment, planning and promotion. In coordination with a wide range of other divisions at The City, the team assists in the engagement and participation of BIAs in various City strategies and programs that support businesses within BIA areas. The development of new programs is guided by priorities identified by BIAs and various City services. Some examples of work underway include the seasonal patio program and the Main Streets program, both of which contribute to a more business friendly environment within BIAs.

Communication and Coordination

- Businesses and external parties can find out about the BIA Team, BIAs in general and the BIA dashboard through Calgary.ca and each BIA's individual websites. 311 is trained and able to take inquiries about BIAs and it is another avenue to get further information about BIAs.
- The BIA team is widely integrated into multiple business units and programs/projects that impact BIAs. Examples of such internal coordination are participating on Tomorrow's Chinatown project, working on the team for the season patios on public property program, or supporting work on public safety and social disorder. More coordination is always warranted and supported.

Other Supports

3.1 Benefit Driven Procurement

Description

Benefit Driven Procurement (BDP) is a Council-approved strategy to create additional and intentional public value using The City's procurement spend to improve community outcomes for Calgarians. Specifically, the BDP Framework supports local businesses when procurement is below $5,000, The City is to obtain quotes from local suppliers whenever possible for goods and services ($5,000<$75,000) and construction ($5,000<$200,000). At and above trade agreement thresholds, The City includes a BDP questionnaire to drive additional public value and to support small business and underrepresented groups which include women, Indigenous, new-comers, and other equity-deserving communities.

Communication and Coordination

- The BDP Framework and questionnaire are described and advertised on calgary.ca/bdp page.

Other Supports

3.2 Innovation Through Procurement

Description

Innovation through Procurement (ITP) is a way for The City to increase opportunities for start-ups and small- and medium-sized businesses with an innovative idea or technology to have The City as their first customer.

ITP enables The City to proactively pursue innovative solutions by issuing specific procurement challenges, referred to at The City as challenge statements. These challenge statements will help innovate and test new ideas brought from citizens and industry through running pilots to explore new technology and equipment.

Challenge statements are designed to allow collaboration between The City and industry but may not result in a procurement. Where an appropriate level of risk is present, The City may experiment testing solutions to challenge statements and such testing may become a part of a larger procurement process in the future.

Communication and Coordination

- The City posts challenge statements on the Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC) website and potential suppliers have equal opportunity to respond.

Other Supports

3.3 5G Digital Playground

Description

5G Digital Playground provides a testbed environment for collaborators to experiment and research the capabilities of 5G while providing feedback to further develop and sustain the delivered network within the testbed.

Communication and Coordination

- The City released market notification in late 2021 to inform the potential collaborators of the project. The City has also been working closely with Calgary Economic Development to ensure the attraction of industry and researchers.

Other Supports

3.4 Living Labs

Description

The City of Calgary's Living Labs program offers physical, digital and data assets (where possible) for companies and researchers to test and try ideas and products in a real-life environment. Calgary's reputation as a Living Lab is growing and The City of Calgary is helping to support our innovation ecosystem. In 2021, Living Labs received 50 requests from businesses testing out their new technologies. For completed projects, there has been overwhelming positive customer feedback for Living Labs program and how it enables companies to easily conduct research and development of their products and services.

Living Labs has been successfully operating since 2018. The Program has not been funded with dedicated resources since.

Communication and Coordination

- Living Labs works with partners such as Calgary Economic Development, Platform, post-secondary institutions, and others to find potential companies and researchers who want to test and try their products in a real-life environment.
- The Living Labs program acts as a "one window" support to help navigate and host conversations with the required business units. Internal coordination occurs through contacting the business unit(s) director offices to seek confirmation to pilot a product or technology.
- Living labs intake form can be found at Calgary.ca/LivingLabs

Other Supports

3.5 Digital Services Squad

Description

The Digital Service Squad (DSS) helps small businesses adopt new technologies and embrace digital marketing. The squad offers free one-on-one assistance to eligible businesses across Calgary.

Communication and Coordination

- Business and Local Economy team worked with Communication Services to promote the services offered by DSS to local community.
- DSS offerings are also advertised at the business web hub Calgary.ca/business
- There has been limited coordination/internal communication about DSS.

Other Supports

3.6 Advocacy Campaigns

Description

The City holds various advocacy campaigns to support businesses including #SupportLocalYYC social media campaign and Small Business Week to support local businesses. We also collaborate on campaigns initiated by other business units, such as the Open Sooner campaign that emerged from Planning & Development Services.

Communication and Coordination

- Business and Local Economy team works with Customer Service & Communications to design and implement advocacy campaigns.

Other Supports

3.7 Experience Downtown

Description

"Experience Downtown YYC" marketing campaign began in May 2022. Focuses on encouraging visits downtown outside the work week and supporting businesses and activities in the Greater Downtown business improvement areas. A multi-year downtown marketing campaign is currently being developed.

Communication and Coordination

- Cross-corporate team designed and implemented this marketing campaign.

Other Supports

3.8 Parking Lot and Parks Activation

Description

Since March 2022, Arts & Culture has invested over $1.2M into the downtown area to support activations through partnerships with local organizations. Throughout the remainder of 2022, an

additional estimate of over $1.2M will be invested through Arts & Culture partnerships. This includes a Midwinter Event Grant Program targeting BIAs, the Centre City Banner program lead by Calgary Arts Development, and a $300K grant to Calgary Downtown Association to develop a Nighttime Economy Strategy.

Parks & Open Spaces has increased commercial services in City parks and developed a new program that helps reduce red tape. The full review of the Vendors in Parks program is underway. We have also created and launched the V.I.P. (Vendors in Parks) Pop-Up program, which began the weekend of July 1st with activations in four parks and it will run until the last weekend of September. This new program allows vendors to come for a day, a weekend or multiple weekends and setup in one of four designated Calgary parks sites with tents provided. We have also managed to reduce the requirement of a business license for these vendors.

The program engagement has already begun and will include park users, seasonal vendors, pop-up vendors and internal staff on determining the benefits and the barriers of the program. **CD2022-1104 provided Council with a Briefing on the outcomes of this program for 2022.**

Communication and Coordination

- These activations are a result of cross-corporate collaboration and coordination led by Arts & Culture.

Other Supports

3.9 Open Data Program

Description

The Open Data Portal integrates City data from various business units and makes it available for public use. The number of datasets available has been growing. Businesses are welcome to use these structured and machine-readable data free of charge and without a need to formally partner with The City.

Communication and Coordination

- City data is discoverable and accessible through data.calgary.ca, The City of Calgary's Open Data Portal. In addition, one can also reach out to opendata@calgary.ca.
- Currently, new datasets or updates to datasets are communicated via Twitter on an irregular basis. The City is in the processes of creating a platform for external and internal users to view open data stories (use-cases), to further encourage users to support data-driven decision making via open data.