

CIVIC DISTRICT PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Civic District Public Realm Strategy. The project team has completed the second phase of the project, which included a stakeholder and citizen engagement process, and is working to refine a series of draft strategies that will help guide the development and enhancement of the district and better connect visitors with the area's many public destinations. Further investigation and engagement is required in order to refine and finalize the strategies, prioritize public realm improvements and develop a funding model. The final Civic District Public Realm Strategy report will be completed by 2015 Q2.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Planning & Urban Development recommends that Council direct Administration to deliver the final Civic District Public Realm Strategy to the SPC on Planning & Urban Development no later than Q2 2015.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2014 SEPTEMBER 10:

That the Administration Recommendation contained in Report PUD2014-0618 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2013 September 06 Council approved PUD2013-0622, which provided an update on the development of the Civic District Public Realm Strategy and recommended that the final Strategy be completed no later than Q3 2014.

On 2012 November 19 Council approved PUD2012-0671, which outlined the scope of work, timeline and budget for an urban design study of the Civic District, and directed Administration to proceed with the study and report back to Council through the SPC on Planning & Urban Development by Q3 2013.

On 2012 July 11 NM2012-34 directed Administration to report back to Council through the SPC on Planning & Urban Development with a scoping study and funding sources for the Civic District Urban Design Study report.

BACKGROUND

The Civic District is centred around City Hall and the Municipal Complex, Olympic Plaza and the New Central Library, and radiates outward towards 4 Street SE to the east, 10 Avenue SE to the South, Centre Street to the West and the Bow River to the north (Attachment 1).

There are a number of capital developments planned or underway in the Civic District. For this reason it is important to have a strategy that consolidates the individual visions from these developments into one common vision. This consolidated vision will enhance and clarify the relationships and connections between the many developments, and provide them with guidance to support the creation of great public spaces.

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The outcome of this project will be the Civic District Public Realm Strategy report, which will identify a range of public realm and infrastructure improvements that could be undertaken by both The City of Calgary and private landowners in order to strengthen the area's importance as a key destination for Calgarians and visitors.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The project team, comprised of Administration and external consultants, has completed the second phase of the investigation and working to refine a series of draft strategies that will help guide the development and enhancement of the district. This second phase of work involved a citizen and stakeholder engagement process, which is described below. The input provided through the engagement process was critical in developing a consolidated vision and the initial draft strategies for improving the area.

Originally planned to be completed by 2014 Q3, further investigation and engagement is required in order to refine and finalize the strategies, prioritize public realm improvements and develop a funding plan for implementing high-priority public realm improvements. The final Civic District Public Realm Strategy report will be completed by 2015 Q2.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

A summary of the stakeholder and citizen engagement completed to date has been summarized in Attachment 2. Stakeholder and citizen engagement was undertaken from fall 2013 to spring 2014. The project team engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders active in the Civic District, including business organizations, community groups & social organizations, cultural institutions and City of Calgary business units. In addition, over 350 Calgarians from across the city and across all wards were engaged through online and in-person engagement opportunities. To date the engagement process has included:

- One-on-one meetings with individual stakeholders to build a collective understanding of the various private and public developments proposed or underway in the area, including the New Central Library.
- Stakeholder workshops to inform and refine a collective vision for the district, identify issues and opportunities for improving the area, and to seek input on initial draft strategies for the Civic District.
- Online and roving public open houses which resulted in over 1,500 citizen comments that are being used to inform the Public Realm Strategy.

Throughout spring and summer 2014, the project team has been refining the draft strategies based on stakeholder and citizen input received to date. The final draft strategies will be presented to stakeholders, citizens and members of Council in fall 2014. Input received during this final phase of engagement will allow the project team to refine and finalize the strategies and prioritize which public realm improvements will yield the greatest benefit for the district. This feedback will inform the development of the Civic District Public Realm Strategy report.

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Strategic Alignment

The Civic District Public Realm Strategy will be aligned with the priorities of the 2009 Municipal Development Plan, 2009 Calgary Transportation Plan and 2007 Centre City Plan.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Providing sufficient time to complete a robust investigation and stakeholder engagement will ensure that the resulting strategies are based on sound research and will enable informed decision making that benefits the triple bottom line.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The work is being funded through existing operating budgets and shared amongst various City business units.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

There are no capital budget costs associated with this investigation. The Civic District Public Realm Strategy will help identify priorities and timelines for optimizing future capital investment in the area. A funding plan for Centre City initiatives is being developed in conjunction with the Civic District Public Realm Strategy report that will recommend funding options for implementing high-priority public realm improvements.

Risk Assessment

None

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Submitting the Civic District Public Realm Strategy in 2015 Q2 will provide Administration and the consultant team with sufficient time to complete stakeholder and citizen engagement, refine the strategies for the area, and develop a funding plan for implementing high-priority Centre City public realm improvements.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Civic District Study Area Map
2. Summary of Engagement Completed to Date