

Off-site Levies Bylaw Communications and Engagement

Summary

Administration has undertaken more than 3 years of intensive and robust consultation with members of industry, industry representation groups, other interested parties and the public on the levy calculations and rates. Administration engaged directly with representatives of Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), the National Association for Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP), Calgary Inner City Builders Association (CICBA), and the public over the course of more than 100 meetings. The City developed the levies (process, methodology, and calculation) in alignment with the Council-approved *Principles for a New Off-Site Levy*.

Starting in 2020, The City undertook the following external engagement and communication:

- Invited representatives from the development and building industry to participate in consultation, including a series of long-term strategic and technical advisory and working groups.
- Hosted a total of 75 working group meetings, 15 Off-site Levy Joint Governance Committee meetings, and five monthly levy process discussions and numerous other meetings on the process, methodology and calculation of the rate with industry members.
- Presented on and held discussions on the levies at the monthly Developer Advisory Committee meetings, the monthly Industrial Strategy Working Group meetings, and the BILD Quarterly meetings.
- Responded to hundreds of questions from BILD and NAIOP in writing.
- Posted all the information used to calculate the levy rate including the methodology, the calculations, and the infrastructure lists online since September 2023. Allowing anyone interested, to download the workbook, modify the variables, and replicate the calculation to understand The City's methodology.
- Launched a public engagement portal and survey in September 2023 designed to engage a broad audience on the proposed levy.
- Hosted two virtual workshops in September 2023.
- Promoted the survey and workshop engagement opportunities by way of social media, emails to our mailing list, dispatch articles, and invitations to 16 interested party groups.
- Sent 1,900 invitations by mail and hosted a virtual session in September 2023 to address questions from Greenfield landowners.
- Hosted several additional meetings with BILD and NAIOP in October to December 2023 to address final questions and concerns.
- Invited those interested in learning more to reach out with questions.
- Provided responses (in writing and by meeting) to anyone who contacted The City.

The City heard feedback and suggestions on the financial calculation used to determine the proposed levy rate, concerns about the levy rate being too high or too low, and concerns about the availability of the essentials to serve Calgarians into the future. Administration integrated suggestions and edits to the calculation wherever possible, if the suggestions were defensible, accurate and consistent with both Provincial legislation and the Council directed levy principles.

Introduction

The review of the Off-site Levies Bylaw has been a substantial effort between The City and interested parties, including the development and building industry, from the outset.

Early engagement with industry continued the productive working relationship established during the 2016 Off-site Levies Bylaw discussions. This consultation fostered a platform for exchanging ideas with development industry representatives and exploring various options related to levy methodology and calculation. Materials, such as presentations and meeting notes, from each working group session were made accessible through the Off-site Levies Project webpage [Off-site levy \(calgary.ca\)](https://www.calgary.ca/off-site-levies).

In parallel with the project webpage, a public engagement page (engage.calgary.ca/offsitelevies) was created on The City's [Engage Portal](https://engage.calgary.ca), in the fall of 2023. The portal was designed to communicate the proposed Off-site Levies Bylaw to a broad audience. It served as a platform for the sharing of technical information, background documents, levy calculations, and offered opportunities for individuals to learn, seek clarification, pose questions, and provide feedback on the off-site levy methodologies. Feedback was collected through a questionnaire available on the Engage Portal from 2023 September 18 to October 6.

To ensure comprehensive feedback, the project team actively sought input through three online events in September 2023. The first event involved sending letters to landowners of undeveloped land in the Greenfield Area, guiding them to the [Engage Portal](https://engage.calgary.ca) and inviting them to a targeted online evening presentation and Q&A session with project team members, held on 2023 September 26. The remaining two online events were open to all interested individuals or organizations and followed a format similar to the landowner Q&A session. Following these events, a narrated [YouTube video](#) was made available on the [Engage Portal](https://engage.calgary.ca), allowing those who could not attend the previous events to watch the overview presentation.

The following sections summarize the extent of internal and external consultation sessions. Starting in 2020, representatives from BILD, NAIOP, and CICBA were invited to participate in an extensive consultation, including a series of long-term strategic and technical advisory and working groups, with some pauses through COVID-19 and for City staff to respond to internal and external audits.

Engagement Summary

Industry engagement

The review of the Off-Site Levies Bylaw has been a collaborative effort between The City and members of the development and building industry from the outset. Starting in 2020, The City engaged directly with members of BILD, NAIOP, CICBA and the public.

As part of the early engagement process, we asked development and building industry members to complete an online survey. They were asked to comment on an early version of the methodology for the Off-site Levies Bylaw and the proposed methodology for the Established Area Linear Levy and the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Levy.

Public engagement

Public engagement on the proposed 2024 Off-site Levies Bylaw occurred between 2023 September 18 and October 26. Various ways were made available for Calgarians to learn more about off-site levies, ask questions and provide feedback.

Online Public Information Sessions

In September 2023, several opportunities to provide feedback on the proposed 2024 Off-site Levies Bylaw were provided to a variety of interested groups and the public. At the three virtual sessions, the project team presented an overview of the proposed 2024 Off-site Levies Bylaw and outlined where to find more information and provide feedback online. Following the presentation, the project team answered questions from attendees.

Approximately 1,900 greenfield landowners were mailed invitations to attend a virtual Q&A session on September 26, 2023. Approximately 11 landowners attended. Two public virtual workshop sessions were held on 2023 September 27 and 28. Twenty-three (23) people attended the September 27 session and fourteen (14) people attended the September 28 session.

Engage Portal

Calgarians were invited to provide feedback on the proposed 2024 Off-site Levies Bylaw during public engagement. From 2023 September 18 until October 6, Calgarians and interested parties were able to find more information about the project and provide feedback on the [Engage Portal](#):

- 5,048 views
- 3,622 visits from 2,805 visitors
- 263 contributions from 77 contributors. There were 87 contributions to the Water Infrastructure Levies questionnaire, 63 to the Transportation Infrastructure questionnaire, 56 contributions to the Community Services questionnaire and 57 to the Off-site Levies Rates questionnaire.

Visitors to the [Engage Portal](#) were asked to complete a short questionnaire related to one or more levy areas in which they were interested. Four questionnaires were open for feedback corresponding to the areas of Water infrastructure, Community Services infrastructure, Transportation infrastructure and Levy Rates.

The [Engage Portal](#) was also designed to be a repository for information and background documents for Calgarians to read online or download. The five most downloaded documents were:

- Off-site Levy Bylaw Water Linear Review – Whitepaper – 204
- Off-site Levy Bylaw Water & Wastewater Review – Whitepaper - 176
- Off-site Levy Bylaw Stormwater Infrastructure Review – Whitepaper - 174
- Off-site Levy Bylaw Transportation Review – Whitepaper - 87
- Off-site Levy Bylaw Fire Review – Whitepaper – 45

A detailed summary of feedback and questions and issues raised at online public information sessions is available online at calgary.ca/offsitelevy.

Working groups engagement

Throughout engagement, The City received valuable feedback with respect to methodology that warranted further exploration. Working groups comprised of City staff and representatives from the development and building industry. They were designed to discuss the technical details the proposed off-site levies.

City staff that participated in these working groups were subject matter experts from the Growth Funding and Investment division, Infrastructure Services and Operational Services, and the Finance Department. Representatives from BILD, NAIOP, and CICBA participated in the working groups sessions. All members of the working groups agreed to the Terms of Reference prior to the first working group session.

The working groups acted as a sounding board and reviewed options related to the methodology, inputs and assumptions were used to calculate levy rates. Feedback was integrated to the levy rate calculations where appropriate.

Working group members were invited to participate in distinct Water, Community Services and Transportation working groups. A separate working group was established to explore the Established Area Linear Levy. A detailed summary of feedback and questions and issues raised at the working group sessions is available online at calgary.ca/offsitelevy.

Summary of consultation and engagement sessions

The following illustrates the extent of engagement and consultation sessions throughout the Off-site Levies Bylaw process.

Table 1: Summary of external consultation and engagement sessions

Engagement Groups	Members	Purpose	Number of Sessions
Water Working Group	City staff plus external representatives from BILD, NAIOP, and CICBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acted as an industry sounding board Reviewed options related to methodology, calculation of the levy 	34
Transportation Working Group			20
Community Services Working Group			15
All Working Group Participants	City staff plus external representatives from BILD, NAIOP, and CICBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed final drafts for levy rates 	6
Subtotal – Working Groups			75
Off-site Levy Joint Governance Committee	City staff plus external representatives from BILD and NAIOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified opportunities to improve transparency, accountability and completeness of off-site levy reporting and associated mechanisms 	15
Monthly Levy Process Discussions	City staff plus external representatives from BILD and NAIOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed the progress of the levy project and suggested amendments to the off-site levy methodology 	5
Public Information Sessions	City staff plus interested parties including greenfield landowners and industry members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided opportunities for anyone who might pay an off-site levy to learn, ask questions, and provide feedback on the off-site levy methodology 	3 plus Online survey
BILD Follow-up Sessions	COO, General Managers, senior leadership team, BILD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided opportunities to discuss outstanding questions and issues related to the Off-site Levies Bylaw methodology 	6