

Communications and Outreach Summary

Introduction

With Council's approval of *Home is Here: The City of Calgary's Housing Strategy 2024-2030*, City Council directed Administration to prepare the necessary bylaws to immediately make the base residential district [Rowhouse-Ground Oriented] (R-CG). Council's direction also included proposing changes to allow for both a secondary suite and a backyard suite on one parcel and to remove the parking requirements for backyard suites. Administration was directed to return by 2024 Q2.

Based on this direction, Administration undertook a broad public information campaign with two goals: to provide information and to collect feedback for Administration and Council's consideration. Administration provided Calgarians with easy-to-find, plain language information on:

- Why rezoning was being proposed.
- What rezoning means and how it may affect a property.
- What was not being proposed.
- How Calgarians could participate in the public hearing of Council and how they could share their thoughts with Council.

We focused on listening to Calgarians and providing them with information to enable them to inform their feedback to City Council. All feedback received by Administration to date is contained in the "What We Heard Report" section of this attachment.

Accessibility and Inclusivity Considerations

Given the broad reach of this policy, we wanted to ensure that Calgarians could access the information they needed, regardless of ability, technological constraints, language or availability. Efforts to this end included:

- Plain language descriptions of our proposal on all websites and at all events.
- Print copies of our website content available through our dedicated call center for Calgarians without access to technology, included translated materials for major language groups.
- A translation tool for the City Engage Portal page, which provided translations in Calgary's top ten language groups.
- A mix of in-person and online events, including daytime, evening and weekend options; and
- Interpreters available at key events where translation services have been required for past City sessions.

The Public Information Campaign

The public information campaign focused on these key actions:

1. The mailbox campaign.
2. In-person information events and webinars
3. Interactive website and social media information opportunities
4. A dedicated call centre.
5. Community-led information events
6. Legal Letters of Notification with Plain Language Inserts
7. Advertising and physical signs

The Mailbox Campaign

Not all Calgarians were aware of Council's approval of *Home is Here* in September 2023. To create awareness amongst Calgarians of the Housing Strategy and Council's direction, Administration sent a

postcard to every residential address in Calgary in mid-January 2024. Over 500,000 postcards were sent to residential parcels in Calgary. They were sent to both property owners and renters because all Calgarians are affected by the housing crisis. The postcards were designed to create awareness of the public hearing of Council on April 22, 2024, and to let the recipients know that more details were available on the project's website.

In early April 2024, Administration will send out a second postcard to all 500,000 households in Calgary (regardless of current zoning) to remind all Calgarians that they have a voice in this initiative and that the date of the Public Hearing is approaching.

In-Person Public Information Events

In January and early February 2024, Administration hosted six in-person public information events. The locations were spread geographically around the city to make them convenient to reach for all Calgarians. The events were designed to give Calgarians an opportunity to speak directly with City planners so they could better understand the proposals and share their feedback with Administration and Council.

Based on feedback received three additional in-person events have been scheduled in mid-March to further expand access to our public information campaign.

Online Webinars

To assist those that would prefer the convenience of remote participation, four 90-minute webinars were hosted. Two of the events focused on information for the general public, and two events focused on providing information to the development industry. All events were open to anyone who was interested.

Interactive Websites and Social Media

Administration created a dedicated project website that included:

- an interactive address map that allowed Calgarians to see what was being proposed for their property.
- background information on the proposed districts.
- photos of built examples.
- A Frequently Asked Questions section.

The website was regularly updated to provide more information and to reflect new questions or concerns that Administration was hearing.

In addition, Administration created a [City Engage Portal Website](#) that included:

- a feedback submission tool; and
- date, time and location for the information sessions and webinars.

Information and awareness advertisements were also placed on YouTube, Spotify, X/Twitter and C-Train/Transit digital displays.

Dedicated Telephone Call Centre

For Calgarians with limited or no internet access, or for those who preferred to speak to The City, Administration set up a dedicated call centre for the project. The call centre was staffed with employees who could provide information, as well as print-out copies of the website information and comment form to mail to anyone who asked in various languages as required. Administration also had paper copies of all information and comment forms at all information sessions.

Information Events led by Others

Administration offered to attend various Councillor and community led townhalls and open houses to lend support in answering questions.

In addition, Administration attended sessions organized or hosted by the Federation of Calgary Communities (2024 February 27), BILD Calgary (2024 February 21) and Social Policy Collaborative (2024 February 20). These were opportunities to meet with interested parties upon request and share information answering questions on the proposed changes. Administration is working to schedule meetings with the University of Calgary, Calgary Real Estate Board (CREB), and Calgary Inner City Builders Association (CICBA). Administration will continue to support any additional requests ahead of the Public Hearing of Council.

Walking Tours

Administration will be hosting in partnership with the Federation of Calgary Communities two walking tours in March and April ahead of the Public Hearing of Council.

Legal Letters of Notification with Explanations in Plain Language

In March 2024, Administration will send out legal letters with a plain language insert to all property owners who will be affected by the proposed rezoning. The letter will be addressed to the property owner. This letter will come with a special insert that is focused on a plain language explanation of why they are receiving these letters. It describes what is happening including the proposed textual amendments to the Land Use Bylaw and rezoning. The plain language insert also includes an explanation as to why these changes are proposed. Further, it provides a description of the three proposed rezoning scenarios to help explain what that might mean for each owner including images illustrating the possible built forms. Lastly it includes how to continue to provide comments or participate in the Public Hearing of Council.

Physical Signs in Communities

Large format road signs were placed through communities and in high-traffic intersections.

Performance Data for the Communication Campaign

Communication activities began prior to the 2023 September 16 Special Meeting of Council when the Housing Strategy was approved by Council. This campaign was highly successful with 600 individual Calgarians, groups and organizations sharing their views at the 2023 September 14 Community Development Committee. Some further measurements and indicators of this success include: *

- 24,030 visits to the housing strategy webpage and 26,776 page views
- The Housing Strategy document was downloaded 1,440 times.
- 647,208 impressions (views) from various social media ads
- 7,607 clicks on the ad to read more or go to a link.
- Close to 600 people shared the link to the ad with a friend.
- 850 comments submitted via the engage portal that will be summarized in our What We Heard report.

* Note: this data is for the time between January 15 and February 5, 2024.

Overview of Communications Activities Post September 16, 2023

Communication Tactics

The following is an overview of all tactics used to ensure Calgarians had the information needed to help make an informed response to Council including metrics.

Digital and Paper Advertisements

- Citywide postcard mailout: 557000 mailed.
- Social media campaign: 1,647,465 impressions
 - Facebook: 895,343 impressions
 - Twitter 429,591 impressions

- Instagram 322,531 impressions
- Nextdoor 6 posts
- Digital advertisements on high-traffic websites and YouTube: 459,932 Impressions
 - Digital banner ads: 158,301 impressions
 - YouTube: 195,635 impressions
 - Multilanguage ads: 106,266
- Radio Ads on Spotify and multilanguage radio stations
 - Spotify: 79,614 impressions
 - Multilanguage radio stations: 11 spots
- Communication out through newsletters
 - Dispatch: 3847 impressions
 - Community newsletters: 3 articles in 84 community newsletters citywide
 - Council newsletter: 1 article (*launched in January 2024)
- Digital transit screens: 3,526,709 impressions
- Large format road signs (Bold) placed through communities and in high-traffic intersections: 55 signs.
- Email update to subscribers: 2702 impressions

Personal Interactions

This number represents Calgarians that actively or passively got involved. This includes people who visited the website, attended a virtual session, subscribed for email updates, attended a working group session, received and engagement booklet in the mail, etc.

- Website: 41,868 visits
- Interactive map: 47,706 visits
- 2015 feedback forms received (paper and online)
- 465 registered for a virtual/online session
- 660 attended the in-person session(s)
- 1,367 social media interactions (comments, reactions, shares, etc.)
- 170 calls answered by dedicated call-centre providing opportunities to assist with questions and inquiries.
- 290,074 legal notifications mailed to landowners.
- 1,809 online engagement contributors
- 557,137 postcards (2024 January)
- 557,137 postcards (2024 April)
- Two walking tours scheduled (pending)

What We Heard (as of February 2024)

The information campaign is ongoing and will continue up until the Public Hearing on April 22, 2024. A comprehensive What We Heard will be provided to Council ahead of that date. Of the comments analyzed to date, approximately one-third are supportive of the proposed rezoning and two-thirds are opposed. Below is a summary of themes heard to date.

Key concerns include:

- **Impacts to Community**
 - Parking: respondents were concerned that the proposed rezoning would create new parking issues in neighborhoods and would exacerbate these issues where parking is already limited.

- Community character: some respondents indicated that they had purchased their home because of the single-family nature of their community, and that additional density would not be appropriate in that context.
- Built form: some respondents have expressed concerns about uncertainty around what will be built next door and having limited ability to provide feedback.
- Infrastructure and traffic: some respondents were concerned that existing City infrastructure, such as water and sanitary lines, electrical supply, and roads, are not adequate to accommodate the strain caused by additional density. Some respondents were concerned that the proposed rezoning would create new issues with traffic congestion in their communities or exacerbate those issues in communities where traffic and congestion is already a concern.
- Property values: Some respondents were concerned that the proposed rezoning would lead to decreased property values, especially once R-CG developments were constructed in their communities. In addition, some respondents indicated that they paid higher property taxes given the value of their home and expected that this would lead to greater protection for the types of housing that exist there currently.
- Loss of trees and landscaping: some respondents were concerned that R-CG developments would reduce the amount of green space and number of trees in their community, which would negatively impact the character of their community and lead to environmental issues such as increased runoff.
- Zoning of Parks: concerns were voiced that the proposed rezoning map shows parks spaces being proposed for rezoning. There are concerns that this means parks will be redeveloped for housing.
- **Citywide Approach**
 - Timing: some respondents are concerned about the timing and feel as though The City is moving too fast.
 - Location considerations: some respondents would like to see more housing in new communities or would prefer a community-by-community approach. Some respondents believed that additional density would be better located closer to transit corridors, and in communities where redevelopment is already taking place.
- **Housing Crisis**
 - Immigration: some respondents have expressed concerns over immigration policies being the underlying cause of the housing crisis.
 - Affordability: some respondents express doubt that adding housing supply would result in greater affordability. There is a desire for more data to justify these recommendations.
 - Accountability: some respondents feel as though individual property owners are responsible for solving the housing crisis themselves.
- **Council**
 - Forgone conclusion: some respondents feel as though this decision has already been made. Some respondents expressed frustration and a lack of trust in Administration and in Calgary City Council.
 - Plebiscite: Some respondents are asking for a plebiscite or referendum on this matter.
 - Federal Funding: some respondents feel as though this change is only needed to secure federal funding.

Key benefits included:

- **More homes needed:** some respondents believed that more units were needed across the city to create greater housing affordability and availability, provide greater housing choice for Calgarians at all income levels, reduce the infrastructure required for new communities and support the long-term maintenance of municipal infrastructure, and support more amenities at a community level.
- **Location considerations:** some respondents have said that if rezoning is important citywide then it should be citywide with no exclusions. There were some communities specifically pointed out as needing to be included from an equity perspective.
- **Economic benefits:** some respondents felt that the proposed rezoning would have a variety of economic benefits, including enabling businesses to attract new talent to Calgary, and general benefits to the local economy, including for small business.
- **Density near transit:** some respondents who were in favour of the proposed rezoning also supported higher density housing near transit stations and corridors.