

Lessons Learned

Over the past six years, the Local Area Planning team in Community Planning has taken an iterative approach that continues to improve and enhance how local area plans are developed through the Local Area Planning Program. The Chinook Communities project team has continued to incorporate lessons learned from the previous four local area plans, resulting in additional innovative strategies and improvements to engagement, policy and internal processes.

Engagement Highlights

A robust engagement process is at the heart of the Local Area Planning Program. Continuous process improvements through lessons learned will continue to enhance our Program as new plans are developed across Calgary.

Innovative Strategies

New School Engagement Strategy

- A new strategy has been developed for engaging school boards to ensure the LAP project team receives feedback at each phase of the project, including joint school board meetings.
- Growth Analytics has developed a set of city-wide demographic information and shared the results with the school boards. There may be updated information to share in the development of Phase 3.

Targeted Engagement

- The Chinook Communities has a large employment region east of Macleod Trail S that includes a range of commercial, office and industrial uses. A targeted engagement session for business operators and landowners was conducted to provide a different perspective and more feedback relating to the Manchester Industrial area.
- The Youth Engagement Booklet was another form of targeted engagement to understand what is important to youth, how they move about their communities, what they love about their communities and what they wish they had more of within their communities.
- Additional spots were allocated for youth members on the working group as part of an effort to obtain more feedback from an age range that is typically lacking in public engagement.

Improvements

Engagement Activities

- Two additional Conversation Series were added before Infrastructure and Planning Committee to provide additional opportunities for the public to ask questions to the project team.

- The project team circulated information on participating in public hearings to the public to raise awareness on the next steps in public participation during Phase 4 public events, both in-person and virtually.
- To increase the number of touchpoints with community associations, walking tours and attendance at board meetings were offered during every phase of the Plan. The project team also provided a one-on-one meeting with new planning and development board members for two community associations to assist with their transition into the role.

Conversational Video Presentations

- Building on lessons learned from Phases 1 and 2 of the project, we shortened the length of online video presentations for Phases 3 and 4 to be more conversational and consumable for the public. The new video presentation formats are approximately three to five minutes, highlighting the key ideas and topics for each phase of the project, with a greater focus on graphics to explain our work and what feedback we are collecting.

Policy Highlights

Policies in local area plans guide future growth and change. As the Local Area Planning Program continues to evolve, additional policy considerations and enhancements are being introduced into local area plans.

Innovative Strategies

New Area Specific Policies

- During engagement, we heard that there was a desire for portions of Manchester Industrial to be flexible, evolve and welcome additional uses beyond industrial uses. In response, the Chinook Communities Local Area Plan developed the Manchester Special Policy Area to provide additional guidance and encourage complementary non-industrial uses that will serve a new residential population in close proximity to existing and potential future transit station areas.

New Executive Summary

- As a result of the discussion when the Riley Communities Local Area Plan was presented at the Infrastructure and Planning Committee in 2024 October, an Executive Summary was added to the beginning of the Plan. The summary includes an overview of the Plan area, the current and future evolution of the communities, the vision, the key moves and locations for the residential urban form categories and a brief overview of each chapter.
- To improve clarity for the policies that follow in Chapter 2: Enabling Growth, the legal interpretation of shall, should and may statements are included in the Executive Summary.

Improvements

Potential Infill LRT Station Planning

- Area specific policies were added in Chapter 2: Enabling Growth to plan around a potential future LRT station. This also encourages investment into a station if the surrounding area redevelops with supporting infrastructure and uses that encourage public transit usage.

Plan Boundary Change

- Based on the public feedback received in Phase 1, the Chinook Communities' boundary was amended to include the 39 Avenue LRT Station and nearby area. It was shared with the public with the launch of Phase 2.

Internal Processes

Continuous process improvements are integral to the Local Area Planning Program. We consistently seek opportunities to enhance our methods, workflows and ways we work together to create and sustain local area plans.

Innovative Strategies

Simultaneous Projects

- The Local Area Planning Team conducted consistency meetings to ensure up-to-date policy language and policy options that make it clearer for industry, planners and the public to read and interpret LAP policies when dealing with projects in different areas throughout the city.

Connection With Simultaneous Planning Projects

- There were simultaneous projects ongoing city-wide and within the Plan area during the Chinook Communities public engagement windows. To support an organized public engagement effort, the Chinook Communities project team, the City Building team and the 50 Avenue Functional Planning Study attended the same open house. This enabled the public to attend the open house, learn and provide feedback for three ongoing projects in one location. This helps reduce engagement fatigue within the community and demonstrates to the public how the various projects are collaborating.

Improvements

Calgary Planning Commission Timing

- Going to CPC earlier in the process (before Phase 3) allowed the project team to incorporate CPC member feedback prior to Phase 3: REFINE being launched.

Graphics

- An executive summary was added to the beginning of the Plan to support interpretation. The summary includes visual illustrations to highlight the key moves and focus areas for new development.
- Graphics and layout were revised for the vision and core values with updated plan-specific illustrations for Chapter 1: Visualizing Growth.
- Refinements to Chapter 3: Supporting Growth were made to visually illustrate plan-specific investment opportunities linked to goals, objectives and implementation options.