The City of Calgary Cut Red Tape
Best Practices & Recommendations Report

Document Purpose

The purpose of these best practices and recommendations are to provide a general outline of our learnings and observations during the life of the program (in collaboration with the Mayor's Office, our employees and business advisory group). Global research and personal interviews were conducted during the planning phase of the program and the results from these inputs have influenced the information brought together here. This report will be shared with the internal City team that will be operationalizing and implementing the "red tape" principles into everyday business processes and operations at the City.

The official program's "Lessons Learned" document has also been shared with the operations team for reference and future planning.

Introduction

In 2010, the City of Calgary kicked off the Cut Red Tape (CRT) program to make sure any interaction with us is better, easier and faster for our citizens, businesses and employees. This means transforming government and improving services to enable business and citizens to thrive in our great city.

Cutting red tape and streamlining processes provides many benefits for citizens, businesses and government but when it comes right down to it, the main objective is to save valuable time and money for everyone. As of June 2015, the CRT program has saved over $14 million, deeming the program a success in terms of dollars saved, but more importantly, a shift in our culture to seek innovation solutions and collaborate more closely with our customers.

Red Tape Definition

Red tape adds time and complication when there often doesn't need to be any. It refers to non-essential procedures, forms, licences and regulations that Calgarians face which add to the cost of dealing with the City of Calgary. This includes anything obsolete, redundant, wasteful or confusing that diminishes Calgary's economic and lifestyle competitiveness and stands in the way of job creation or wastes taxpayer time and money. Red tape does not include activities that are demonstrably effective and necessary for the protection of public health, safety and environment.

Impacts of Red Tape

- Poor economic growth, job creation, poor service, reduced productivity and innovation
- Loss of trust in the municipality
- Lengthy time-frames for decisions and service
- Disruptions to business operations, competiveness
- Unnecessary/high costs, job loss, business closures
- And ultimately, frustration for our citizens and employees.

Where is Red Tape Found?

The following are key areas where red tape can be found that typically originate with good intent but can create burdens and undesired outcomes:

1. **Rules & Regulations** – the City implements bylaws and regulations to protect the public's health and safety, the environment, and to achieve certain social or economic goals. That said, the cost and compliance barriers for our citizens are not always in account. The City of Calgary will be adopting smart bylaws and policies, when planning, designing, amending or creating new

bylaws or policies to ensure they are simple and less burdensome and expensive for businesses and our citizens to comply with.

2. **Service Delivery** - red tape is created by the administrative procedures and systems that become obsolete or are poorly designed making them pointless or inefficient. The City of Calgary will continue its transformation into a more citizen-focused municipal government and deliver excellent provide services at a fair price and implement bylaws, policies and services that are efficient and effective.

3. **Communications** - red tape is created when stakeholder interactions (online, printed or in-person) are not clear and transparent. The City continually aims to be more effective regulating, enforcing and delivering services, when its communication is more transparent, clear and simple. Establishing instant communications between the City and its residents and officials is just one aspect, but it needs to be clear and useful. There are also issues with inconsistent interpretation of legislation between City employees.

Related Council Priorities

There are two key Council Priorities for 2015-2018 that directly relate to the Cut Red Tape direction.

1. **A Prosperous City** – Calgary continues to grow as a magnet for talent, a place where there is opportunity for all, and the best place in Canada to start and grow a business. One of the strategic actions to accomplish the economic growth and competitiveness is action P4- Cut red tape and continue to foster a competitive tax environment to help small business succeed.

2. **A Well-run City** - Calgary's government is open, responsive, accountable and transparent, delivering excellent services at a fair price. We work with our government partners to ensure we have the tools we need. Within this priority, the strategic action is W7- Continue to transform the organization to be more citizen-focused in its approach and delivery of service.

CRT Guiding Principles

The Cut Red Tape program has five guiding principles for the delivery of services to citizens. Our services should be:

Simple	We believe that simpler is better. Our government system, processes and communications must be easy to understand and navigate.
Innovative	We will foster innovation and new technologies and continually be open to creative solutions.
Flexible	We believe we should offer flexible service options at the convenience of our customers.
Outcome-focused	We must always consider the outcomes in everything we do. We must be focused on improving the experience of our citizens and the success of businesses and organizations in Calgary.
Measurable	We believe that it is necessary to establish performance benchmarks and continually measure progress.

Recommendations for The City of Calgary

Below are the recommendations put forward by the program team as the cut red tape initiative moves into City operations and is grouped by themes. The best practices have been developed by the program team based on experience, research and engagement with other government agencies across the globe.

1. SPONSORSHIP

1a	**Best Practice**
	Ensure highest possible level of support is in place for a cut red tape initiative.
	City Alignment
	Mayor, City Manager, Deputy City Manager
	Recommendations
	Continue the cut red tape direction within City administration; informal, quarterly updates to Council and alignment with Corporate Culture to ensure acceptance internally.
1b	**Best Practice**
	Ensure funding mechanisms are secured, both for the CRT program and the projects it will deliver within the organization.
	City Alignment
	Council Innovation Fund
	Recommendations
	Continue with funding for new operations team and consider utilizing the Council Innovation Fund to fund new projects.

2. ENGAGEMENT

2a	**Best Practice**
	Communication and collaboration are key – allow stakeholders to share issues, but also solve service delivery issues. The current practice is to initiate a partnership between citizens, businesses and public service to reach valuable outcomes. Citizens today are more active, informed and involved in municipal government than ever before.
	City Alignment
	engage! Policy Citizens and other stakeholders are involved early on and throughout the process, especially when the decision(s) impact their lives ensuring we are accountable, inclusive, transparent, committed and responsive. *Customer Service Framework* Public sector customer service standards are continually evolving and are influenced by other sectors such as retail and private industry. The evolving trend in public service is to become more *customer-centric* by providing services based on customers' needs. Customers want personalized service, knowledgeable staff and access to programs and services through multiple channels. Once again the voice of the customer or citizen is key to drive program and service improvements. *Plain Language Policy* A successful government must be transparent and inclusive when communicating. Explanations and information should be presented in clear, plain language - clear, concise, well-organized, and easily understood and acted upon by the intended audience. *Digital Strategy*

	This strategy promises that The City of Calgary be more open and that: • We have accessible services. • We pursue and build partnerships. • We are transparent. • We provide and support platforms for citizens to participate. • We value innovation.
	Recommendations *engage!* Engage early and ongoing, perhaps occasional audits could be conducted on specific projects. A great example of holistic engagement was demonstrated for the Residential ePermit project. End users were engaged before any action or changes were implemented, understanding pain points for both our customers and the City were paramount. Design and implementation steps were done in tandem with the customer resulting in a smoother change management process and ultimately better product. *Plain Language* Ongoing plain language reviews throughout the organization should be conducted, including Calgary.ca The policy could have more tangible enforcement processes. The scope of the policy could be broader to include bylaws, policies and legal summaries.
2b	**Best Practice** Once a red tape program is implemented, it is important to provide a mechanism for ongoing intake of ideas.
	City Alignment The City has identified a group within Analytics Calgary who will be responsible for continuing the CRT initiative. They will be responsible for how ideas are brought forward, analyzed and delivered.
	Recommendations The City of Calgary should create an ongoing intake channel to continue to gather ideas to cut red tape. Considerations when prioritizing: • quick wins • greatest impact on large number of customers • focus on projects that reduce costs for customers • most benefit for least amount of effort

3. MEASURES & BENCHMARKING

3a	**Best Practice** Defining what success looks like from the start helps governments improve organizational performance. Measuring and benchmarking against similar organizations assists with determining how well their organization is performing and how to build capacity or change and improve services. Establishing consistent and regular measurements as well as providing baseline information are two of the main activities.
	City Alignment *Results Based Accountability* Measures serve as a key indicator to demonstrate that we are moving the needle in the right direction. Corporate Initiatives is responsible for this function at a corporate-wide level.

	• Performance Measurement, Benchmarking & Risk - Results-Based Accountability and participation in the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking. • Service Efficiency and Effectiveness - coordination of Council's approved Corporate Strategy for Efficiency and Effectiveness and includes Zero-Based Reviews
	Recommendations Measure and share the impacts of reducing red tape continually as a program. Results-Based Accountability practices should be supported and implemented across the corporation as it serves as a foundational tool for continuous improvement and identifies collaboration with external agencies where warranted. The participation of the City in the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) is a high-level tool. It would necessary to explore and develop other opportunities and partnerships with key organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) to really measure and have a better sense of how the City is doing reducing burdensome regulations and procedures.

4. INNOVATION & ANALYTICS

4a	**Best Practice** Leverage technology - innovation happens when leadership and networks are aligned, but the key is to allow and encourage partnerships between government agencies, the public and private organizations. Innovation commitment is most successful when supported by top levels of an organization.
	City Alignment *Analytics Calgary* As a corporate-wide program to enable data-driven decision making. AnalyticsCalgary will promote the sharing data, research, and expertise across The Corporation and facilitate collaboration in order to find innovative ways to serve citizens. Innovation, one the six initiatives that are part of Analytics Calgary, will foster an environment of collaboration and exploration of ideas to innovate City services. *Data Catalogue* Aiming to increase government transparency and access to information and accountability.
	Recommendations Continued support for Analytics Calgary and delivery of the tools to continue to reduce red tape. This includes the innovation and the open data catalogue initiatives that are most related to the cut red tape areas.

5. SMART REGULATION

Strategies to simplify regulations focus on two dimensions: examining the administrative burden that will be introduced by new regulations before they are implemented, and reforming existing burdensome regulations. Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) process – an exercise to determine the likely effect of any new regulation before it is implemented.

5a	**Best Practice**
	Regulations are in place to protect the public's health, safety and environment while supporting business growth, innovation and social action. Smart Regulation processes improves the design and effectiveness of regulations mainly related to business and economic activities: • elimination of unnecessary regulation that block growth; • new regulation ONLY as a last option; • reduce the regulatory cost to (small & medium) business, social groups and citizens. • minimize inspections moving to a more risk-based enforcement regime
	City Alignment
	Policy Developer's Toolkit. It is quite complete and contains the guide to writing Council Policy, best practices in Council Policy Development and the developer's checklist.
	Recommendations
	The City should consider establishing a Bylaw Developer's Toolkit similar to the Council and City Policy Developer's Toolkit and could include a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). This RIA will assess the impact of a new bylaw, regulation or amendment before it is implemented. A cost-benefit analysis should be completed as well as a competitive analysis when establishing requirements in City's bylaws and regulations with a focus on compliance costs. • It is important to consider the needs of small business and citizens, knowing the impact of a new regulation is often proportionally higher on them than on bigger business or corporations. It also important to consider the unintended consequences or outcomes from the requirements or information requests. • The City's role should be first as facilitator rather than as a regulator. Creation of a bylaw should be thoughtfully considered as last option. • Consistency. It is not only about duplication and inconsistency with other bylaws, policies or legislation (levels of government) regarding the requirements, but establishing the correct expectations. What really we are looking for with those demands. • Ensure the effectiveness of new bylaws, regulations or amendments. Is it reasonable to comply with and enforce?

5b	**Best practice**
	Cities everywhere work to balance the need for regulation to ensure public health, to protect quality of life and promote economic growth. To achieve this balance, cities must periodically review their regulatory regime - exploring questions of when to regulate and what rules might best govern the permitting, licensing, compliance, and monitoring of local business activity.
	City Alignment
	Council Policy Library (PAC001). Two of the policy procedure stipulations are: Council, PAC, any Standing Policy Committees may review the policy Library, at any time, to determine which, if any, policies need to be reviewed or rescinded. PAC shall formally review the policies in the library once every 3 years (once per term) to determine which, if any, policies need to be reviewed.
	Recommendation
	1-3-5 Annual Review A review 1 bylaw/policy, 3 administrative processes, and 5 forms per year. It would be necessary to make sure City's bylaws and administrative processes are up-to-date with the technology trends, new social and economic realities.

1 Bylaw/Policy: The Council Policy Library itself is a good example of the need to enforce the directions given by policies. This policy has not been updated to reflect new realities like the changes of the name of the Council's Committees or the change of the Council term. We still read PAC instead of Priorities and Finance Committee –PFC- and 3 year term instead of 4. In 2013, no policies were reviewed.

3 Processes: To gain efficiencies, effectiveness and faster delivery of services, administrative processes are fundamental. City processes should be customer-focused and include frontline city staff to identify the best ways to improve effectiveness and efficiencies of the delivery processes. The City of Calgary has the Business Process Review group within IT available to support these efforts – this should be communicated widely as a specialty service offering.

5 Forms: They are key tools for customers, citizens and the City. Reviews should be conducted to ensure ease of use, asking for only required information and most importantly, considering if there is an online option available. Ideally, these form submissions are entered directly into a database and don't need to be manually input.