

BUSINESS REVITALIZATION ZONES 2015-2018 BUSINESS PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Administration was directed to undertake a Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) review process and recommend options to better support existing BRZs, encourage innovation, and foster the creation of new BRZs. During Phase 1 of the review process, Administration facilitated the engagement of the BRZ community and key stakeholders, along with conducting a review of best practices across North America. Findings from this phase illustrated the need for the development of a 2015-2018 BRZ business plan (Phase 2), incorporating the following three themes: 1) an enhanced BRZ and City interface; 2) the integration of economic and social goals within the BRZ framework; and 3) increased strategic alignment, resource leveraging and expanded collaboration between BRZs and key stakeholders in the community and business sectors.

This report constitutes Phase 2 of the Council directed BRZ review process, including the Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) 2015-2018 Business Plan (Attachment), developed by Calgary's ten BRZs. This document addresses the three key themes from Phase 1, while also incorporating two additional priority areas, accountability and long-term sustainability. The business planning process involved the formation of a Business Planning Committee, which was BRZ led, along with membership from key City of Calgary partners and input from the BRZs businesses themselves. Feedback from these sources highlighted the need for an enhanced City and BRZ interface to further coordinate and streamline service response and communication, along with fostering the sustainability and growth of BRZs. As a result of these findings, Administration has incorporated the addition of 1.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions into the 2015-2018 Action Plan process (adding to the current 0.25 of an FTE in City liaison support); along with a one-time ask of 100K in 2015 for business plan implementation.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Priorities and Finance Committee recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2012 August 28, Council adopted NM2012-38, approving Councillor Pootmans and Councillor Mar's Notice of Motion, directing Administration to provide an overview of the current state of municipal support for BRZ development in Calgary, research municipal best practices, and recommend options for consideration to better support existing BRZs, encourage innovation, and foster the creation of new BRZs and report back to Council through the SPC on Community and Protective Services no later than first Quarter 2013.

On 2013 March 18, Council approved CPS2013-0272 'Business Revitalization Zones Update – Deferral Request', directing administration to bring forward the report on the Business Revitalization Zones Update no later than 2013 June.

On 2013 July 29, Council approved PFC2013-0591 'Business Revitalization Zones Update – Deferral Request', directing administration to bring forward the report on the Business Revitalization Zones update no later than 2013 December.

BUSINESS REVITALIZATION ZONES 2015-2018 BUSINESS PLAN

At the 2014 January 13 Combined Meeting of Council, The Priorities and Finance Committee Recommendations contained in Report PFC2013-0819 were adopted, as follows:

That Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Direct Administration to complete Phase 2 of the BRZ review process and report back to Council through the Priorities and Finance Committee with a 2015-2018 BRZ business plan to support BRZ development no later than 2014 September.

BACKGROUND

The Municipal Government Act's (MGA) mandated purposes of a BRZ are to improve, beautify and maintain property in the zone; develop, improve and maintain public parking; and, promote the zone as a business or shopping area. However, BRZs across Alberta are working to revise this mandate to include the critical role they play in the community not only as economic incubators but also as social innovators.

Calgary currently has ten BRZs: Bowness, Calgary Downtown Association (CDA), Fourth Street South West, Inglewood, International Avenue, Kensington/Louise Crossing, Marda Loop, Montgomery, 17th Avenue Retail Entertainment District and Victoria Park. The first Calgary BRZ was established in 1984 (17th Avenue) and the most recent in 2011 (Montgomery).

There has historically been a single point of contact within The City for BRZs, focused on ensuring a coordinating response to BRZ issues while also supporting BRZs in navigating and accessing City resources. Additional support includes assisting with facilitating the process required for the establishment and disestablishment of BRZs as well as amendments to BRZ bylaws when a change in boundaries is requested. The current City liaison role for the BRZs is supported through Animal & Bylaw Services, with 0.25 of a FTE allotted.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

During Phase 1 of the review process, Administration facilitated the engagement of the BRZ community and key stakeholders, along with a review of best practices across North America. Findings from this phase illustrated the need for the development of a 2015-2018 BRZ business plan (Phase 2), incorporating the following three themes: 1) an enhanced BRZ - City interface; 2) the integration of economic and social goals within the BRZ framework; and 3) increased strategic alignment, resource leveraging and expanded collaboration between BRZs and key stakeholders in the community and business sectors.

Phase 2 of the BRZ review, the development of a BRZ 2015-2018 Business plan involved the formation of a Business Planning Committee, with all ten Calgary BRZs leading the development process, along with membership from key City partners, including Animal & Bylaw Services (ABS), Planning, Law, Community & Neighbourhood Services (CNS), Transportation, etc. Additionally, throughout the process ABS provided input, coordination, research and business plan development support as the BRZ liaison for The City. Further, as a means of ensuring the planning process was as balanced and inclusive as possible, an external consultant was utilized to facilitate the business planning meetings themselves. It is important to note that the BRZ business plan is a BRZ document, developed by the BRZs, which Administration will support through the liaison role.

BUSINESS REVITALIZATION ZONES 2015-2018 BUSINESS PLAN

The BRZ 2015-2018 Business Plan (Attachment) outlines the strategic direction for the BRZ community through the following key focus areas:

- Collaboration with Key Stakeholders
- Integration of Social and Economic Goals
- Enhanced BRZ/City Interface
- Accountability
- Outcome Measurement
- Additional Funding Sources/Long-Term Sustainability.

Further, within these key focus areas, the BRZ Business Plan outlines a number of key actions to be accomplished over the course of 2015-2018, including:

- Disseminate best practice governance, partnership and accountability practices
- Development of a BRZ annual report/enhanced reporting to Council
- Establish key outcome measures to inform BRZ planning and highlight the their impact
- Development of a BRZ Guide to support the growth / succession planning practices
- Development and implementation of an annual BRZ business survey
- Pursuit of new funding mechanisms, including parking revenue
- Increased partnership with Calgary Economic Development and other business sector partners, building on the momentum from the flood event
- Development of business continuity plans for all BRZs.

As the BRZs evaluated the breadth of work to be undertaken in the coming years, and reviewed the current BRZ/City interface, a determination was made that additional resources were required in order to further BRZ development and growth in Calgary. The current BRZ liaison role provided by The City is 0.25 of an FTE. The addition of further liaison support would focus on supporting BRZ governance best practices, ensure increased accountability and enhanced BRZ reporting to Council, assist in improving the efficiency of communication / service response between BRZs and City departments, and support the identification of alternative funding sources to ensure the long-term sustainability of BRZs. Administration has incorporated the addition of 1.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions into the 2015-2018 Action Plan process (adding to the current 0.25 of an FTE in City liaison support); along with a one-time ask of 100K in 2015 for business plan implementation.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

This business planning process was BRZ led, with support and input from City of Calgary business units, including Animal & Bylaw Services (ABS), Planning, Law, Community & Neighbourhood Services (CNS), Transportation, the Centre City team, Calgary Police Service (CPS), Finance, Parks, etc. To inform the work of BRZs, a comprehensive literature review was completed involving best practices in other jurisdictions.

In addition, a BRZ-led survey of BRZ businesses was undertaken in 2014 September, providing feedback on strategic direction and key issues to address moving forward, and subsequently informing the BRZ 2015-2018 Business Plan development process.

BUSINESS REVITALIZATION ZONES 2015-2018 BUSINESS PLAN

Strategic Alignment

Calgary BRZ priorities closely align to the top priority areas identified in the *Calgary Action Plan 2015-2018* including:

A prosperous city – City Council Strategy P3 identifies a need to focus on supporting civic, business and community partners, as well as business revitalization zones, to collaborate and attract local and global investment.

A city of inspiring neighbourhoods – Every Calgarian lives in a safe, mixed and just neighbourhood, and has the opportunity to participate in civic life.

A well-run city – Calgary's government is open, responsive, accountable and transparent, delivering excellent services at a fair price.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

BRZs help to create a sense of place that allows for people to gather and socialize. They are vehicles for the involvement of local citizens in planning and improvements to public spaces.

Environmental

BRZs allow for greater environmental stewardship of an area, thus encouraging the protection of open space and enhancement of this valuable urban resource.

Economic (External)

The increased promotion of existing destination based experiences as well as expansion of new experiences will allow local businesses to flourish.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

Administration has incorporated the addition of 1.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions (170K) into the 2015-2018 Action Plan process (adding to the current 0.25 of an FTE in City liaison support); along with a one-time ask of 100K for business plan implementation.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

None.

Risk Assessment

The maintenance of existing support levels would create significant challenges with respect to the enhancement and growth of the BRZ sector. It would also result in a missed opportunity to increase support for BRZs as key building blocks in the creation of complete communities.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

This report constitutes Phase 2 of the Council directed BRZ review process, including the Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) 2015-2018 Business Plan (Attachment). Feedback from BRZs, the business sector and key community stakeholders highlighted the need for an enhanced City – BRZ interface to foster the sustainability and growth of the BRZ community.

ATTACHMENT

Business Revitalization Zones (BRZ) 2015-2018 Business Plan