Project Overview

In 2016, City Council created the Community Representation Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force was asked to review options and advise Council to enhance the contribution organized community groups (such as community associations, business improvement areas, residents' associations, seniors' groups, sport and recreation groups, cultural and faith-based organizations) make toward representing community and improve the effectiveness of The City's community building processes and practices. The Task Force is comprised of members from Council, the development and building sector, community and residents' associations, the University of Calgary and City Administration.

Initially, the Task Force identified three areas of focus for a community representation framework (CRF):

1. **Representation structure** – a system by which organized community groups and individuals collaborate with City staff on community building issues.
2. **Community involvement** – clear roles, responsibilities and expectations of different stakeholders in community building, with significant focus on the processes and practices of The City with respect to community involvement.
3. **Supports and resources** – human resources, funding and programs required to build the capacity of individuals and organized community groups so they can effectively contribute to community building processes.

Task Force members worked together to develop a set of criteria to evaluate approaches used in cities across North America to foster participation and representation in community building processes. This exercise provided an opportunity for Task Force members to share their insights and experiences of community representation in Calgary and to learn about different approaches used elsewhere.

The Task Force reviewed the case study prepared by the program team using the established evaluation criteria. This phase of work helped clarify questions related to improving community involvement in community building processes and the supports and resources that would benefit community representation activities. The result of discussions of the Task Force was a proposal to investigate the efficacy of a district forum model of representation. It is important to note that this was not a unanimous position of all Task Force members, but there was sufficient direction to include this proposal in the update report provided to Council in February 2018.

Engagement Overview

Council approved the recommendation for the Community Representation Framework project team to:

1. Gather input from a diverse range of community stakeholders in response to a new approach for community representation envisioned by the Community Representation Framework Task Force.
2. Use the input gathered to inform the Community Representation Framework Task Force recommendations that will be presented to City Council by the end of 2018.

To meet this direction Administration completed engagement in two parts or phases. Both reports of everything we heard can be found on the project website at www.calgary.ca/CRF

Phase 1 – understanding the current state
In May 2018 we sent three surveys to:
- Community associations
- Business improvement area groups
- And a variety of community groups (residents' associations, seniors, faith, cultural, and sport organizations, etc.)

The surveys were tailored to the groups' typical role in planning processes. The surveys had two goals. One, was to understand current practices. Two, was to get initial thoughts and ideas about the suggested district forum model. All information heard here was then to be used to design the second phase of the engagement. We got just over 200 completed surveys. For the full What We Heard report, the list of questions see the project website www.calgary.ca/CRF.

Phase 2 –Workshop trade-offs
In June 2018 we hosted six workshops across the city. We had 95 participants attend the workshops. We used what we heard in phase 1 to design the workshops. We asked participants to work through trade-offs, challenges and opportunities on the following three topics:

- Membership, diversity and inclusion
- Resources, capacity and training
- The District Model; including their thoughts/suggestions on a working copy of a Task Force terms of reference

For a full breakdown of the workshops and to see everything we heard visit the project website www.calgary.ca/CRF.

What We Did
You shared with us over 4,000 ideas, opinions and considerations throughout the engagement. We want to share with you first a summary of what we did with your information and then a table that links specific themes to the Framework.

What We Did - Summary
1. All your comments were shared with the Task Force members and with the project team.
2. We emailed all reports to registered participants and to everyone on the mailing lists. This included all community associations, business improvement areas, and a variety of other organized community groups.
3. We posted the What We Heard Reports on the project website www.calgary.ca/CRF.

4. Overwhelmingly we heard through Phase 1, the surveys, that you wanted to discuss the need for the District Model. We themed what you told us about the model, created a one page summary. This One page summary was used during the Phase 2, workshops, as starting points for discussion.

5. You shared with us varying levels of commitment, interest and challenges with diversity and inclusion. Members of community associations specifically shared resource challenges and needs. We used these challenges and ideas to structure the workshops, and as questions/trade-offs for discussion.

6. One key concern shared throughout the engagement was the fear/sentiment that it was a done deal and that the input we collected would not be used. To make sure that your ideas were easily accessible during the discussion about the Framework a member of The City's Engage team was also invited to be part of the Task Force meetings from March through October 2018. They designed the process, wrote the reports, and were present at most of the workshops. Their role in the meetings was to represent your ideas, feedback, questions and concerns as shared in the two reports.

7. A summary of all of the key themes was shared in two separate presentations by the Engage member with the Task Force. These were about the three topics discussed during the workshops: membership, diversity & inclusion, supports & resources and the District Forum model.

What we did – table of key actions

The table below is a summary of some of the key trade-offs you shared and how they were used in the crafting of the Framework. Please note not everything you said is in the table but all of the key issues, challenges and ideas you shared were used during the discussions about the Framework. The table refers to specific priorities and results in the Framework found in Appendix 1 - Community Representation Framework: Priorities and Results. Please note that all of is this is depended on Council Approval at the end of 2018.

	What we asked	What we heard	What we did
Phase 1 surveys	1. How do you currently review, share information, and with who, on planning applications	1. You asked for more regular and timely information. 2. You asked for transparency on Task Force meeting minutes. 3. You asked for reporting back on how the information will be used. 4. You shared what resources you need and you think others would need to participate effectively in the planning process.	1. We have shared information through City staff (neighbourhood partnership coordinators) and through email. 2. Task force minutes were made available on the project website. 3. This report shares what was done with your feedback for this project. The CRF has shred this information with Planning and there is existing work underway to make this consistent. 4. This information will also be used in 2019 as part of the pilots.

	2. What is working, what isn't working, and where you need support	1. Working well: collaboration, sharing information between groups.
		
		2. Challenge:
		  a. Time commitment
		  b. Voice not heard by The City
		  c. Don't know groups in the community
			1 & 2. We used all of the information shared here to shape the questions and discussions during the working groups.
			
			2. Challenges:
			a. The Task Force confirmed under Priority 3: Raise the capacity of citizens and organized community groups as a result of this information.
			b. Engage was invited your information at the Task Force so your ideas were central to the discussions.
			c. The project team has connected with Action Dignity to discuss with community leaders and brokers how to promote inclusion. This is still a challenge the project team is looking at how to address in 2019.

	3. District model, qualifications, additional resources needed for participant	1. Desire for more information on how the model would work. 2. Desire for discussion of the model.	1. This was a challenge because the decision on what a District Forum was, or if it would be recommended, was not decided. So more information on what it was and how it would work could not be shared with you because the project team did not know.

	What we asked	What we heard	What we did
		3. Desire for terms of reference. 4. Overall lack of support for the model and wanting to stop the project.	2. A trade-off sheet/summary sheet of comments/concerns and opportunities of the model was available at every table. 3. A working terms of reference was available at every table for comment. 4. We did not stop the project as some asked.
Phase 2 workshops	1. Membership, diversity and inclusion	1. Need clarity on the Framework. 2. Focus on relationship building, trust and better City processes and City being the model in what this means.	Overall all of the priorities talk about membership, diversity and inclusion and took into account the challenges, ideas and needs you shared with us through your feedback. Specifically: *1.* The Framework will be shared in November with everyone who participated. This could not be done sooner as the feedback from you needed to be included in the recommendations. *Update: committee date has been postponed, please visit* Calgary.ca/CRF *for updates.* 2. Process & relationships: a. All five priorities address this concern/suggestion in different ways and this theme, and related comments were used to shape all five priorities and many of the results because you very clearly told us that there needs to be an improvement in City processes. b. The City is doing additional engagement with a local group, Action Dignity, to see how it can better support inclusion in planning. This work will continue in 2019.
	2. Resources, capacity and training	1. Concern about another layer of bureaucracy, another drain on volunteers when any challenges in the planning process could also be addressed	The main theme we heard from members of CAs in this section was the need for supports and resources to both do your day to day work and to make sure that if any additional work is required (through a new model or forum) that you had support to do that. You also told us that many of the

	What we asked	What we heard	What we did

		through bettering existing City processes.
		
		2. Planning needs to be more plain language and easy to understand.
		
		3. Resources to collaboration and inclusion, supports and resources to know who to connect with to make the CA more inclusive.
		
		4. Consistently in staff, processes and expectations of participant's and time to participate.
		
		5. Predictability in process and decision making.
			issues could be fixed by focusing on streamlining existing city processes rather than building something new. Based on these two themes, and the many comments associated with them, the Framework talks about priorities and results, rather than the creation of a structure. Priority #4 is all about better aligning the work of The City and Priority #5 about supporting the evolving role of CAs.
			
			More specifically:
			1. Priority #3 and Priority #2 were shaped by this feedback to make sure that City processes were better aligned and that resources existed to support anything new.
			
			2. The project team is looking to see where it can make information about Planning easier to understand. The team is working with Partners in Planning to see where things can be made easier.
			
			3. Resources:
			   a. What resources are needed is being collated and will be shared with the working groups in 2019 to better understand what supports are needed and how to make the Framework a reality.
			   b. The City has done engagement with Action Dignity to see how it can better support inclusion in planning. This work will continue in 2019.
			4. The need for consistency was added under Priority #4.
			5. The need for more predictability in processes was added under Priority #4.

	3. The District Model	Overall you told us that this should be a process vs. a structure.	The Task Force spent a lot of time discussing your comments about the pros and cons/challenges of a District Model and the trade-offs you shared between a structure vs. a process. As a result, The Framework talks about priorities and results

	What we asked	What we heard	What we did
			rather than the creation of a structure based on your feedback.
		1. You shared that a District Model had potential pros and cons: a. Pro: collaboration and sharing of resources. b. Con/challenge: drain on resources, loss of local context/voice. 2. Need for clear roles and responsibilities. 3. Need to make sure that the local context is not lost, and that what is local stays local. That the process is appropriately (based on impact) scalable.	1. The Task Force developed additional results based on your feedback on the pros and cons so that the Framework meets the intention of what you shared with us. a. Results that aspire to promote collaboration between organized community groups are mentioned throughout the priorities. b. Priority #4 and Priority #5 specifically address recourse and local context/the scalability of the process. 2. The need for clear roles and responsibilities is addressed under Priority #3. 3. The importance of local context and a scalable process is under Priority #4.
	Other	1. Based on feedback at the first session you asked for us to send the feedback forms to you through email so you could have more time to provide comments.	1. We emailed all registered participants the worksheets so they could have more time to reflect and provide additional thoughts. We received 19 worksheets/comment forms through email and had 95 participants across all six workshops.

Next steps

In 2019 the Framework will be tested if approved by Council by the end of 2018. The exact method and what this looks like, what projects will be tested is to be determined.

Appendix 1 - COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION FRAMEWORK: PRIORITIES AND RESULTS

Priority 1: Increase participation and diversity

Increase the number of people and the diversity of participants (across ages, socio-economic, cultural backgrounds and gender identities) involved in collaborative community-building processes and organized community groups. Improving the equity of opportunity for people to participate is an important consideration in achieving this priority.

- Citizens and organized community groups are aware of the opportunities they have to participate in community-building processes.
- Participation in community-building processes is relevant and meaningful to citizens and organized community groups.
- Community-building processes are designed to be welcoming, accessible and provide equitable opportunity for all interested citizens and organized community groups.
- Citizens and organized community groups work collaboratively to foster a shared understanding of the diverse perspectives and interests in their community.

Priority 2: Build trust and respect between stakeholders

Community-building processes should not only result in achieving the priorities of the community and other planning goals. They should also contribute to building and maintaining strong social ties between citizens and groups in the community. This will improve the social cohesion between people in a community and make communities more resilient to change.

- Interactions amongst stakeholders are open, safe and welcoming.
- Citizens, organized community groups, The City and the development and building industry have trusting, respectful relationships.

Priority 3: Raise the capacity of citizens and organized community groups

Develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of individual citizens and members of organized community groups to serve their communities and participate collaboratively in community-building processes. Topic areas should include municipal government (including planning and development) community leadership and organizational governance. By increasing the capacity of these stakeholders and providing a clearer roles and responsibilities, their participation in community-building processes will be more effective.

- Citizens and organized community groups have learning opportunities that help raise their capacity to effectively contribute to community-building processes.
- Collectively, citizens and organized community groups are effective representatives of the diverse perspectives and interests in their community.
- Citizens and organized community groups understand their roles and responsibilities in community-building processes.

Priority 4: Better align the work of The City

Better align the work of The City so assists communities to have the information and subject matter expertise they need to participate in community-building processes, including community-driven initiatives and public realm improvements. Such alignment will help citizens and organized community groups contribute to community-building processes in a more meaningful and relevant way and improve the trust between organized community groups and The City.

- Citizens and organized community groups have timely access to clear, concise information about community-building processes.
- Citizens and organized community groups can effectively navigate services and access subject matter expertise to help them effectively participate in community-building processes.
- Resources are available to support community-driven initiatives and public realm improvements.
- The City's community-building processes are based on a consistent and predictable approach that can be adjusted for characteristics of community.
- Community-building processes are scalable, so broad public input is sought and used to establish citywide or district goals and local input is sought and used to successfully achieve those goals at the local level.

Priority 5: Support the evolving role and needs of Community Associations

Community associations face new and evolving challenges that can hinder their ability to offer programs and services to local residents and serve as representatives of community interests. To better address these challenges, community associations need new sources of revenue and new collaborative partnerships with other organized community groups so their volunteers have the resources they need to help achieve the goals of their communities.

- Community associations have a strong membership base and adequate volunteer resources.
- Community associations have adequate financial resources to help them achieve their goals.
- Community associations and other organized community groups leverage their resources and knowledge through collaborative partnerships.