

Project summary – April 2020

The information in the project summary, including the originally planned recommendations, were prepared prior to the impacts of COVID-19. At this time, we can neither project nor quantify the magnitude of COVID-19 on Calgary communities and on The City's implementation and financial capacity, but the project team is prepared to adjust as needed.

Project background

The Established Area Growth and Change Strategy (the "Strategy") will support growth in established areas of Calgary. The Strategy will support communities and local businesses where growth and change are happening. It will do this by connecting planning, financial and investment decisions together, within the Municipal Development Plan vision.

This work supports the implementation of our long-term planning goals by making investment recommendations in strategic, prioritized areas. It also examines how funding and financing tools are used to support growth through redevelopment. Collaboration with communities, businesses, shallow utility providers, and the development and building industry has helped develop strategic planning and budget recommendations for Council's consideration.

Phase 1 of the project tested a growth-related investment framework and identified short-term actions that align with guiding project factors. Phase 1 actions include proposed (1) investments in public realm and utilities in the Phase 1 growth areas, (2) process and policy improvements that support ongoing redevelopment, growth and change across all established areas, and (3) the development and implementation of financial mechanisms to enable the delivery of identified investments. Phase 2 will continue work on actions that, due to their complexity, will take longer to define and implement.

Project purpose

The Strategy will help The City support communities, local businesses, and the development industry where growth and change are happening. This will be done by improving the connection between planning, financial, and investment decisions.

Growth within existing communities supports efficient use of land and services and provides current and future residents with nearby amenities and employment opportunities. Some communities are already experiencing significant redevelopment, while others are not redeveloping as quickly. As communities are interconnected, providing recommendations that support a multi-community area is important.

The Strategy will advance the implementation of long-term planning goals by:

- making investment recommendations in strategic, prioritized areas;
- examining how funding and financing tools can be used to support growth through redevelopment; and
- collaborating with communities, businesses, shallow utility providers, and industry through working groups to propose strategic planning and budget recommendations for Council's consideration.

EAGCS Advisory Group

The EAGCS Advisory Group consisted of representatives from each of the primary stakeholder groups and City of Calgary business unit Directors. This group guided strategic thinking around the project. It provided high level advice to the project team, helped define the structure and tasks of the working groups, using a consensus model to support project decision making. The Strategy Advisory Group also considered the final Phase 1 program recommendations.

Financial Planning & Investment Working Group

The Financial Planning & Investment Working Group led the identification of funding and financing tools that can support growth and redevelopment. They also explored a variety of funding and financing tools that can be used for utility and public environment investments. This work helped them identify and make recommendations for further development of funding and financing tools to move forward with to support utility and public environment investments.

Utility Working Group

The Utility Working Group focused on water, sanitary, stormwater and ENMAX utilities. For each of these areas they discussed identified challenges, explored opportunities to better support redevelopment, reviewed data and analyses, identified the types of infrastructure that require funding, and provided recommendations for improvement. They also identified actions to explore further during Phase 2 of the Strategy.

Public Environment Working Group

The Public Environment Working Group focused on identifying what public realm infrastructure is desired to support quality of life in growing established communities. Examples of public realm infrastructure includes, but is not limited to: upgraded parks, upgraded pedestrian realm and traffic calming. They also supported the development of a decision framework to support investments in public amenities and surface infrastructure.

Members of Community Associations and BIAs within the project area were asked to provide feedback and input into the public realm projects identified by the Public Environment Working Group. Initial projects were identified through the analysis of more than 75 recent engagement reports, meeting minutes, feedback documents and letters dating back to 2015. The data gathered provided information on citizen and stakeholder opinions on redevelopment within communities, the things they value, the tools we use, the issues that arise and the outcomes they envision. The Public Environment Working Group used this feedback to help:

- identify what public realm amenities are desired by communities;
- identify public realm amenity projects within the identified Phase 1 growth areas; and
- prioritize public realm amenity projects within the identified Phase 1 growth areas.

Planning and Policy Tools Working Group

The Planning and Policy Tools Working Group explored existing and potential planning and policy tools that are available to support redevelopment in the established area. This included the Next Generation Planning projects and policies, which are connected to the Strategy. This work helped identify work not being done that fits a low effort/high value criterion and can be done quickly and define what projects will move forward. While the group started work on a number of subjects, more meaningful analysis and review will occur in Phase 2.

Phase 2

Phase 2 will expand on the foundational work done during Phase 1. This phase will identify longer-term, sustainable strategies and tools to support growth, change and quality of life in existing communities. As well, the project team will continue to support the creation of policy for local area plans and content for the Guidebook for Great Communities.

Work during Phase 2 will support delivering great communities for existing and future residents. It will enable growth through the efficient use of land and services, which will hopefully boost investor confidence and attract private investment. This work is part of the overall Next Generation Planning System, a group of interconnected projects helping realize great communities.

Phase 2 will include priority work on tools and strategies that require additional time to develop due to their complexity. This includes additional work on the public realm financial tools and support the work being done by the Off-site Levy Bylaw analysis.

Work on the Strategy benefits from the collaboration with community, business, shallow utility, and industry representatives. This multi-stakeholder approach is expected to continue.

The recommendations from Phase 1 will be implemented and monitored while Phase 2 is underway.

Next steps

Recommendations created in collaboration with stakeholders will be presented to the Priorities and Finance Committee on April 29, 2020. These include public realm and utility network investments in Phase 1 growth areas, and process and policy improvements that can enable redevelopment and support communities experiencing growth and change.

If the recommendations of the Strategy are approved, implementation of the projects identified in Phase 1 is expected to begin later in 2020 and continue into 2022. Financial tools will be further developed through this and other initiatives. Process improvements are currently being implemented.

It is anticipated that Administration will develop established areas investment recommendations in Phase 2 and bring them forward in coordination with the 2023-2026 service plans and budget.