

Aligning the City Planning Work Program

Work Planning and Priorities

Recommendation

That the August 28, 2018, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR_6162, be received for information.

Executive Summary

To support the kick-off of the new City Plan project, Administration has revised the City Planning Branch work program to achieve improved effectiveness in advancing key portfolios of urban policy development over the next two years. This approach will include piloting, developing and monitoring a new city-wide policy framework as one of the deliverables of the new City Plan prior to its completion and adoption in 2020.

Report

Current Context

Edmonton's city planning functions touch the daily lives of all Edmontonians. This integrated body of work includes the creation and stewardship of city policies, plans and programs that guide decision-making on development activities and investment decisions impacting Edmonton's environment, ecology, community growth, mobility, and economy. The outcomes of this work can directly affect the health, prosperity, and long-term quality of life for Edmontonians. The preparation of a new City Plan provides a unique window of opportunity to focus Administration's city planning policy work program over the short term, and comprehensively modernize and simplify Edmonton's policy planning system over the long term.

Connection to current process improvements efforts

Work to realign the City Planning Branch's policy development activities recognizes the value of continuous evaluation and improvements to deliver on Council's priorities. In that spirit, this report highlights the approach to adapt present and future planning activities to fully realize Council's Strategic Plan. Administration has already begun to transform how it provides transactional and customer-focused planning and development services through the Urban Form Business Transformation Initiative. The next step is to similarly transform the City's planning policy system to better sequence

initiatives, prioritize work activities and allocate resources to be more efficient and effective.

A new approach to managing city planning priorities

One of the key objectives of the new City Plan, particularly in its implementation phases post-2020, is to reduce policy conflict, simplify the policy landscape for all users (including citizens, communities, businesses, members of Council and City staff), and provide a new approach to strategically sequence planning activities and effectively and transparently employ policy tools.

To support this objective, Administration will create a new city-wide planning framework to deliver a more user-friendly and simpler policy planning system. Application of this framework will result in more effective planning for the city and neighbourhoods, investment in infrastructure, delivery of services, and public engagement opportunities. In the immediate term, and over the next two years, the City Plan project will prioritize and streamline current policy development work to pilot this new approach. In 2020, Administration will introduce the new city-wide policy framework as a better-aligned and more effective system.

City Planning branch work program

Edmonton's city planning functions fall into three major planning work streams that respond to private-sector land development, internal City of Edmonton clients, and public policy development.

Activities span a wide continuum of practice areas and serve many different stakeholders, including:

- providing land planning services to the private sector (such as rezoning applications, land subdivision and engineering drawing review);
- providing assistance and inputs to other administrative areas within the City (such as modeling the proposed LRT network expansion); and
- developing new public policies and tools (such as the creation of new open space plans).

Further, subject matter expertise within this portfolio area includes the following professional competencies:

- land use planning;
- urban design and heritage management;
- open space planning and ecological services;
- drainage and development engineering; and
- transportation and transit planning.

Attachment 1 provides a full description of the City Planning branch work program components. These components represent three major planning work streams that

respond to Private-sector Land Development, internal City of Edmonton Clients, and Public Policy Development.

Aligning public policy development

Of the 275 full time staff in the City Planning Branch, less than 20 percent (52) are allocated to advance policy development-related projects and programs; this includes stewarding corporate policy work and facilitating the integration of projects that involve staff from various administrative branches across the City. To best leverage these resources and maximize positive impact, Administration has reconceptualized the policy development portfolio within the City Planning Branch to do double-duty. The City Planning Branch will focus on completing current implementation projects for The Ways plans, including priority initiatives identified in The Way Ahead Implementation Plan, and on establishing some needed “building blocks” to develop a new City Plan that will ultimately replace The Ways plans. Additional activities include wrapping up some legacy work and targeted projects that respond to particular issues or inquiries. Administration has reprioritized this combined portfolio of policy development work (see Attachment 2) for expedited completion over the next two years for the following reasons:

1. The projects or initiatives are well-underway and substantively nearing completion (typically ending in the short-term, which is 6 months to 1 year, for example the *planWhyte* study);
2. The work will generate foundational and/or ongoing programs for policy development and portfolio stewardship (typically serving internal city needs, for example growth analysis and analytics services); and
3. The programs or initiatives provide critical building blocks for the development of the new City Plan (typically occurring over the medium term, which is 18 months to 2 years, creating system and network plans).

Completing these projects will contribute meaningfully to advancing Council's Vision over the next two years and align with the current capacity to deliver them successfully. Attachment 2 provides a full description of prioritized policy development projects.

What to Expect

Based on the criteria and the list of prioritized policy development activities identified in Attachment 2, the City Planning Branch is actively transitioning planning policy work in two important ways. First, the Branch has reprioritized its work program and focused its resources over the 2018-2020 timeframe to advance high-impact initiatives that will support future alignment and delivery of Council's Strategic Plan, Vision 2050, and a new City Plan that will help inform subsequent work in other branches, such as the Zoning Bylaw Renewal. This transition includes creating new policies, initiatives, studies, land use plans, action plans, projects, and programs. Second, staff will focus efforts in the short term on finalizing many previously-identified policy priority activities

that are nearing completion, with an intention to judiciously shift resources over the remainder of 2018 to maintaining and improving ongoing foundational policy development activities and ensuring success on critical policy building blocks for the City Plan.

To accomplish this, Administration will reallocate both human and financial resources to focus on priority activities that deliver the most impact relative to the inputs they require. This will include the transfer of some activities that are best managed in other departments as they transition from front-end planning to ongoing maintenance. These resources will in turn be reoriented to support City Planning priorities, which include providing core services to internal City departments required to maintain a well-run organization.

The City Planning Branch will continue to focus and monitor its work achieving Council’s Strategic Plan and implementing the new City Plan, which is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2020. Administration will assess new policy-related work that may arise over the coming two years for its alignment with the larger planning process underway, its transformative impact, complexity, and dependencies on other work relative to available Branch resources. In creating a new city-wide planning framework, Administration will benefit from lessons learned from the City Planning Branch’s realignment and reprioritization of policy work referenced in this report. These combined efforts will lay the foundation for the City Plan’s successful implementation in 2020.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Conditions of Success			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Progress land use, transportation, open space, and ecological planning to drive a livable, healthy, vibrant, and economically resilient city	Percentage of priority policy projects completed within expected timeframe	TBD. Project work in progress.	100% (2020 target)

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score (with current mitigations)	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations

Corporate Governance - Corporate planning	Failure to achieve alignment of work program to capital and operating budgets in support of Council's Strategic Plan, goals and Vision	2 - Unlikely	3 - Major	1 - Low	Prioritize existing work program and adapt future policy work	Continue to engage City Planning Branch leaders in development of a new city-wide planning framework to implement future city policy, plans, programmes, and activities
Insufficient Resources - available to support development of the Plan or reach critical milestones	Failure to effectively resource and leverage policy work leading to project City Plan delay and or lessened impact	3 - Possible	2 - Moderate	1 - Low	City Planning Branch policy leaders have been engaged in workshops	Continue to engage City Planning Branch leaders in development of a new city-wide planning framework to implement future city policy, plans, programmes, and activities

Attachments

1. City Planning: Work Program 2018-2020
2. City Planning: Current Public Policy Development Priorities 2018-2020

Others Reviewing this Report

- R. Kits/S. Padbury, Acting Deputy City Managers, Financial and Corporate Services
- M. Sturgeon, Acting Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- G. Cebryk, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- R. G. Klassen, Deputy City Manager, Regional and Economic Development
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Acting Deputy City Manager, Employee Services
- K. Block, Acting Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services