

Pilot Collaborative Process for the Implementation of the Belgravia McKernan Area Redevelopment Plan

Recommendation:

That the February 23, 2016, Sustainable Development report CR_2136, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report provides an action plan to implement the McKernan-Belgravia Station Area Redevelopment Plan in collaboration with the community and other stakeholders and outlines the public engagement undertaken to develop the action plan.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 3, 2015, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration work with the Belgravia and McKernan Communities, other stakeholders, and the City's ongoing Public Engagement Initiative to provide a report with proposed terms of reference for a pilot collaborative process to implement the McKernan-Belgravia Station Area Redevelopment Plan, the terms of reference to consider the neighbourhood context, including rezoning, proposed neighbourhood renewal, traffic planning, and align with the principles and directions in other city-wide initiatives, such as the Infill Roadmap and ELEVATE.

Report

Background

The *McKernan-Belgravia Station Area Redevelopment Plan* was approved by City Council in July 2013 and sets out a vision for land use and zoning decisions in the McKernan and Belgravia neighbourhoods over the next 25 years. The plan seeks to strengthen the character of these neighbourhoods while accommodating additional transit oriented development near the McKernan/Belgravia LRT Station.

Implementation of the plan to date has been primarily market-driven, based on land owner preference and project feasibility in conjunction with community engagement and a review of a proposal's alignment with City policies, regulations and processes. Between 2014 and 2015, Council approved seven rezonings that were in line with the vision of the plan - four in McKernan and three in Belgravia. No concerns were raised at the public hearings for the McKernan rezonings.

In 2014, two of the three rezonings in Belgravia prompted speakers in opposition. Concerns were raised over the impact of infill development (e.g. increased traffic, congestion, planning process). Under the direction of City Council, Administration worked with Belgravia and McKernan representatives and held an information session in an effort to answer questions about the long-term implementation of the plan. While discussion with the two communities provided greater understanding of the Area Redevelopment Plan, plan policies and the rezoning process, Belgravia community league representatives maintained the need for a more collaborative process to implement the plan.

In February 2015, Executive Committee further directed Administration to work with Belgravia, McKernan, and other stakeholders regarding a process to collaboratively implement the *McKernan-Belgravia Station Area Redevelopment Plan*. Since this time, Administration has been working to develop such a collaborative framework and set of tangible actions that will implement the plan, respond to existing community issues (i.e. context), align with existing city policies and initiatives underway, and could inform work in other mature neighbourhoods.

Preparation of Action Plan

In starting this work, Administration met with Belgravia and McKernan community representatives to discuss the Executive Committee motion and potential approach. The process that resulted included two stakeholder workshops followed by a community online survey and review by Administration in order to determine what should be done and how.

Workshop 1 – Building Understanding

In June 2015, Administration facilitated a workshop comprised of community, industry and City stakeholders. It provided an overview of the Executive Committee motion, *McKernan-Belgravia Station Area Redevelopment Plan*, City implementation efforts to date, and engaged participants on three main questions:

- 1) What are the current 'pinch-points' or challenges to implementation of the plan?
- 2) What broad principles could/should guide collaborative implementation of the plan?
- 3) What does successful collaborative implementation of the plan look like to you?

Participants identified a number of challenges to implementing the plan, principles that should guide collaboration processes, and what successful collaborative implementation of the plan looks like to them. Major themes were extracted from stakeholder feedback and later used to create a basic framework and set of principles to collaboratively implement the plan. Based on stakeholder feedback, a process to implement the plan should include:

- inclusiveness, diversity, clear direction of expected change, and stewardship
- access to information, a clear understanding and communication of planning policies, processes, and/or development proposals

- planning and development processes that are simple and use a wide-range of public engagement methods
- recognition that redevelopment certainty, timing, form and quality depends on a number of factors such as market demand, land availability, economic and technical feasibility
- a level of trust in planning processes and decision-making and a community's acceptance of neighbourhood change.

Workshop 2 – Framing Ideas and Action

In July 2015, Administration held a second workshop in which stakeholders were asked to build off the results and themes from workshop 1. Participants were asked to discuss the emergent themes from workshop 1 then write out what ideas or actions they thought could address these on small sheets of paper. These tended to focus on communication, transportation, the nature of collaboration, site context and built form.

The ideas generated were then shared collectively and posted on large posters for all participants to read and provide comment and feedback on. At the same time, Administration asked participants to consider whether ideas generated were in line with the vision of the plan, involved collaboration, were feasible and had applicability in other mature neighborhoods. Participants were then asked to indicate which actions they supported the most.

Online Survey – Testing Support

In August 2015, Administration used the results collected from workshop 2 to create an online survey with Edmonton Insight Community. The online survey was used to collect additional community feedback concerning collaborative implementation of the plan and to test broader community support for specific actions proposed by local stakeholders in workshop 2.

The online survey ran from August 4 to August 21, 2015, and was advertised through; Belgravia and McKernan community leagues, word-of-mouth, mail-drop postcards, newsprint (Examiner), City of Edmonton website, Facebook and Twitter accounts, Edmonton Insight Community, University of Alberta TV advertising, and road signage.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their support for potential actions (drawn from workshop 2 based on major themes that emerged from workshop 1) that could help implement the plan. Attachment 1 provides a list of actions supported by 115 survey respondents. A summary of additional community feedback is also provided in Attachment 1 and organized according to major themes including:

- City-Community Contact
- Public Engagement and Communication
- Transportation
- Development
- Long Term Change

Administration Review – Alignment with Policy and Initiatives

Using the findings from the online survey, Administration examined existing and planned City initiatives to determine what proposed actions were already being addressed and whether other actions could be undertaken to further implement the plan. A review of City initiatives is provided in Attachment 2 and organized according to themes from the online survey.

Action Plan

Attachment 3 consists of the action plan Administration has prepared as the result of its work with the community and other stakeholders in 2015. For each action it indicates what specifically is to be achieved, who needs to be involved and when.

The action plan was prepared to be managed within existing staff resources on a pilot basis. Administration does not have the resources to apply this enhanced level of planning attention generally across the mature neighbourhoods.

The *McKernan-Belgravia Area Redevelopment Plan* includes a monitoring section that directs Administration to monitor the plan's effectiveness and to prepare amendments to the plan as necessary "to ensure that it remains a useful and relevant framework for transit oriented development" in the two neighbourhoods. Administration is prepared to take additional steps, including plan amendments and/or City-initiated rezoning, to ensure that there is adequate potential for development or to reduce conflict associated with individual development proposals if necessary.

Policy

The Way We Grow, Municipal Development Plan, Bylaw 15100

- Section: 3.5.2.1 – Support neighbourhood revitalization that contributes to the livability and adaptability of mature neighbourhoods.
- Section: 3.5.2.2 – Provide a range of community planning services for mature neighbourhoods.

Edmonton's Infill Roadmap:

- Action 1 – Develop and implement an Infill Communications Strategy to share information clearly and widely with a diverse audience, and to enhance and simplify communication between the City, builders and residents.
- Action 7 – Provide tools and resources for residents and groups that are aimed at supporting their involvement in and ownership of infill conversations and activities.
- Action 10 – Identify and support a range of pilot projects that explore creative and new forms of infill in order to provide learning opportunities.
- Action 20 – Pilot a team of City Staff focused on approvals and permitting for small scale infill (up to row housing), along with related communication and engagement activities, to improve infill processes and build internal expertise.

ELEVATE:

- Focus B: Employ community-driven approaches to strengthen neighbourhoods.

Public Consultation

This report and the action plan it contains were prepared based on:

- meetings with community league representatives
- results from two facilitated workshops involving community, industry, city, and other stakeholders
- results from an Edmonton Insight Community online survey
- feedback and discussions with local stakeholders
- additional meetings with Belgravia Community League representatives.

Despite Administration's engagement efforts, Belgravia Community League representatives maintain that this process has not adequately addressed the need to empower community input or develop a new collaborative process for rezoning.

Attachments

1. McKernan-Belgravia Station Area Redevelopment Plan Collaborative Implementation On-line Survey Results Summary
2. City Initiatives Aligned with Stakeholder Supported Implementation Actions
3. Action Plan to Collaboratively Implement the McKernan-Belgravia Station Area Redevelopment Plan

Others Reviewing this Report

- D. Wandzura, General Manager, Transportation Services