

Council Policy to Address Construction Hoardings Standards

Recommendation:

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That City Policy C580 Construction Hoarding, as set out in Attachment 1 of the February 3, 2015, Sustainable Development report CR_1734, be approved.

Report Summary

This report provides information on progress to improve the review and approval of construction hoardings and provides a draft policy for Council's consideration.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the September 30, 2014, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration consult with the development industry, community groups, and other municipalities with respect to policies and best practices on construction hoardings, and prepare a proposed Council Policy that will address:

- standards and regulations to allow for more efficient flow of, and appropriate balance between, pedestrian and vehicular traffic and to improve the aesthetics of construction hoardings
- incentives and fee changes to encourage innovation, creativity and timely removal of construction hoardings
- public participation mechanisms to reduce or mitigate potential negative impact of construction hoardings.

Report

Construction hoardings are temporary barricades used to enclose construction sites. Hoardings occupy portions of the public right-of-way and are used for the safety of workers and the public, and to provide protected areas for construction activities. Some neighbourhoods are experiencing an unprecedented concentration of hoardings as a result of construction activity throughout the city. Largely impacted, some important pedestrian areas are subject to regulations in Zoning Bylaw 12800 which result in constrained construction sites requiring the space to work. Although hoardings are necessary to facilitate development, they have negative impacts on walkability and the public realm.

Current Process and Regulations

Construction hoardings require a number of approvals before installation, including: building permits pursuant to the *Safety Codes Act* and permits/agreements pursuant to City bylaws. The Safety Codes Permit Bylaw 15894 establishes the fees charged for the

hoarding application based on the amount of road right of way occupied and duration. A hoarding agreement is also entered into between the City and the applicant. A number of hoarding regulations and processes have been identified as areas for potential improvement. Internal process improvements have been identified that will help streamline the permit approval process and ensure a comprehensive review of applications and enforcement by Administration. Further consultation with internal and external groups will examine improvements to consistency, development of standards and regulations, incentives and fee schedules, and public participation mechanisms.

Standards and Regulations

City Policy

Administration has prepared proposed City Policy C580 Construction Hoarding, as shown in Attachment 1. This Policy outlines the City's priorities for improved hoardings and will guide future enactments and amendments.

Bylaw Amendments

Administration is currently undertaking a review of the Safety Codes Permit Bylaw 15894 and other applicable bylaws to prepare recommended amendments. The intent of the amendments is to provide greater clarity in regulations regarding what a hoarding should and should not be used for, as well as what type and area of right-of-way occupation is appropriate. A list of contextual considerations is also being explored to support a transparent and consistent review of permit applications. The considerations would provide those reviewing applications the authority to approve or reject hoarding applications based on relevant details including pedestrian routes and the proposed use of the hoarded right-of-way. After the bylaw review has been completed and a list of considerations developed, necessary bylaw amendments will be drafted for Council's consideration.

Changes to Hoarding Agreement

Administration is developing a template for hoarding agreements and a set of standard clauses that can be selected on a site by site basis, which will ensure agreements reflect the surrounding context. The pre-approved clauses will allow for the creation of a standard form agreement process, thereby reducing the number of necessary reviews and increasing efficiency. These changes will result in agreements that reflect current needs and permit flexibility.

Incentives and Fees

Research is under way on best practices for fee schedules in other Canadian cities. A review of Edmonton's current hoarding fees revealed that the amount charged for the occupation of road is nearly four times more per square metre than for sidewalk. This creates an incentive to keep the road clear while occupying the sidewalk. Administration is working to change fees to reflect the importance of sidewalks in high pedestrian areas and acknowledge the City's commitment to encourage active transportation. Incentives for the provisions of public art, in the form of fee reductions, are also being explored. Necessary amendments to Safety Codes Permit Bylaw 15894 will be proposed once

Administration has completed sufficient research and determined appropriate changes to the fee schedule.

Public Participation Mechanisms

Notification

Hoarding is a provincial safety requirement for construction which has already received development and building approval from the City. Improvements have been requested to public notification about road and sidewalk closures. Improvements should not add review time or additional steps to the approval process. The key is to ensure that the best mechanisms are in place so that citizens are aware of hoardings in their neighbourhood and along pedestrian routes. This can be achieved through site signage and pedestrian directional tools. A map of sidewalk closures in high pedestrian areas is being explored and developed. The map could be used as a notification mechanism available on the City of Edmonton website.

Public Art Component

It has been suggested that opportunities exist to engage community associations, area business associations, non-for-profit groups, schools and the Edmonton Arts Council to develop a beautification program in conjunction with hoardings. The intent of such programs is to help beautify construction hoardings that may be in place for extended periods of time, benefit the community through engagement and improve the streetscape without hindering development. Consultation with the development industry will determine the outcome of this initiative.

Stakeholder Consultation

Much of the consultation to date has been with internal departments and the some construction industry leaders to discuss process and concepts for change. If Council approves City Policy C580 Construction Hoarding, Administration will work with the development industry on the operational details of the proposed amendments. The Urban Development Institute - Edmonton Region, will be engaged by Administration throughout the implementation stage to ensure changes are aligned with industry goals.

Hoardings are a vital sign of construction progress and are a necessity for the safety of workers and the general public. This report highlights some internal process changes that can ensure a thorough and consistent review of applications that will not be onerous or add time to the current review process. Moving ahead, Administration will work with industry to continue exploring possibilities to improve the esthetics of construction hoardings and to see that best practices to balance public road right of way for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic are considered in hoarding applications.

Policy

Capital City Downtown Plan:

- Policy 8.4, Downtown Public Arts Programs

The Way We Grow, Edmonton's Municipal Development Plan

The Way We Move, Edmonton's Transportation Master Plan

Corporate Outcomes

This report contributes to the corporate outcomes "Edmonton is attractive and compact" and "Edmonton is a safe city" as it addresses the ongoing impacts of progress in development and the commitment to move people and traffic safely.

Attachments

1. City Policy C580 - Construction Hoarding

Others Reviewing this Report

- K. Rozmahel, General Manager, Corporate Services
- D. Wandzura, General Manager, Transportation Services