

Expand Community Facilities

Council Priorities

Description

The City will get key community facilities in the 10-year capital plan built or advanced. Priority will be on a library and a recreation facility. Need and uses are agreed upon, with multi-use options being considered. A library will be built within four years, and a recreation centre plan and design will be shovel-ready within four years. Partnerships for funding will continue to be explored.

Desired Result

Community facilities meet the needs of Airdrie's growing population

What will that look like:

- The library will serve a population of 125,000 residents
- Regional partnerships for the recreation centre; it is included in the County's recreation planning
- People are using the new facilities and they are not at full capacity as soon as they are built
- Community participation in the outcome
- Facility usage is balanced between public (spontaneous) use, organized sport, and registered programming
- Functional design and programming of the two facilities will consider new services, activities, programs, and other offerings for the community, and not simply duplicate the buildings
- We receive fewer complaints about lack of ice time and swim lessons

Status Update

Q1-20

Recreation Centre

The community facility needs assessment consultant has been hired and the overall scope of work has commenced. However, the community household survey and stakeholder consultation processes have been put on hold due to the pandemic situation. As part of the community assessment, the consultant will be undertaking both quantitative and qualitative research to understand community needs. A statistically reliable survey of households is being designed to garner input about needs and priorities for future recreation amenities. Administration, in consultation with the consultant, identified certain risk in conducting such an assessment at this time. The household survey may be unduly influenced by the current situation and residents may be unwilling to participate while under the added stress of the health emergency.

The consultant has commenced demand/utilization analysis of current community facilities (GP/Arenas/ T&C/Museum). This work involves providing data on facility usage by category of use, by facility amenity, over multiple years and is progressing as internal resources have time to provide to the consultant.

COVID-19 Impacts:

Community survey and stakeholder consultation processes are on hold, as they require significant public engagement.

Recommendations

Q1-20

Community Facilities:

That Council continue to move forward with this strategy in order to complete all the necessary pre-planning that gathers information for Council to allow informed decision-making about the potential future amenities and project the capital budget and operating budgets for both the Library and the Recreation Facility.

In order to undertake the work that was planned for 2020 and to oversee and coordinate the 3 separate consultant teams to carry out the various pre-planning processes, the planned term Project Manager position needs to be hired. If the resource can be hired by end of June, then progress on the Library Functional Plan and Feasibility Study as well as development of the Project Plan will proceed by late August. If the term position is not hired, then the currently suspended Library RFP's would be cancelled and all Library planning work suspended.

Library

There are two separate scopes of work that were put out to tender to support the Library Planning.

The first RFP is for the Library Functional Programming and Feasibility Study of the potential complimentary uses that could be part of the “multi use” component of the new facility. The second RFP is for the external Project Management Services necessary to build the project plan. Both of these RFP’s were due to close and be evaluated when the COVID-19 crisis struck. Both are temporarily suspended until staff resources are available to evaluate, award and commence work.

A full-time term position to manage and coordinate the external consultants working on both the Library and the Community Needs Assessment was scheduled for recruitment in March. This term position has been put on hold as a result of the COVID crisis. Capacity and knowledge to manage and coordinate the complex layers of pre-planning with multiple stakeholders (Council, APL and the community stakeholders) and different consultants do not exist within existing resources.

Should Council wish to continue with this strategy, evaluation of the two RFP’s could continue, followed by award as long as there is the term resource in place before mid – late June/20. The need to have the resource in place is critical to ensuring a coordinated, well communicated, planned approach to achieving Council’s vision for both projects. In order to ensure that the scope of work that is specified in each RFP is completed to the owner’s satisfaction, is critical to setting the direction and budget for future phases of both projects. If the current phase is done well, then design and construction can proceed in a timely and effective manner.

COVID-19 Impacts:

A term position is required to move forward this action plan and manage the complex scope of this project. The position was planned for, but has been put on hold as a result of the COVID-19 response.

Two RFP’s are temporarily suspended until staff resources are available to evaluate, award and commence work.

Initiatives

■ **Build a new library**
Council Priorities | 1/1/18 - 12/31/24

■ **Build a west side recreation facility**
Council Priorities | 1/1/18 - 12/31/25

Expand and Diversify Citizen Engagement

Council Priorities

Description

The City attracts new groups into its citizen engagement to include a wider demographic. Staff will purposefully engage leaders in groups that may not currently be involved. This will ensure representation from residents with varying interests, backgrounds and demographics.

Desired Result

Community stakeholders (residents, business community, community groups, developer community, etc.) feel heard and that their input has been considered with all relevant factors in decision making.

What will that look like:

- Silent majority is identified and then engaged and providing feedback in future public consultation
- Engagement is reflective of our diverse community
- A shared organizational information repository exists where staff can use the research already collected instead of business units having to collect / hire consultants to collect the same information multiple times.
- Processes and procedures are in place to assist and guide business units (and any consultants hired for this purpose) to achieve the outcomes they require from their public engagement sessions.
- Council and SLT understand what public engagement is and how it relates to the outcome based lens of “this is what we’re trying to achieve and here’s what we’re doing to achieve it” and they know what and how to ask for feedback/input.
- Public engagement calendar is in place to ensure there are no overlaps and that community stakeholders do not become fatigued from multiple sessions planned in a short time period.
- Citizens are confident in how to obtain information about the City and how to navigate processes to achieve a goal (this can be through informal networks or formal avenues of communication)
- Council is cognizant of the diverse groups in Airdrie and who should be present in certain discussions about the City (e.g., making the City more accessible for seniors, increasing youth engagement)
- City staff are confident in how to conduct engagement that is genuine, balanced and accessible

Status Update

Q1-20

The Priority Owner Team checked in with Council on January 27 and reviewed the charter objectives and scope to ensure that the work will meet Council's expectations. Council provided confirmation for the work underway. Overarching objectives, strategies and some actions have been defined and measures are being determined.

COVID-19 Impacts:

Most work has been on hold since mid March due to Corporate Communications' and other staff's commitments and responsibilities to the COVID-19 response.

Recommendations

Q1-20

Because the next steps require significant public engagement, it is recommended that further work be suspended until post COVID-19.

Initiatives

■ **Conduct public engagement on public engagement**

Council Priorities | 3/1/20 - 7/15/20

■ **Search for and implement online public engagement software and tools**

Council Priorities | 6/1/20 - 1/4/21

■ **Conduct internal and external education on public engagement**

Council Priorities | 3/1/20 - 9/1/20

■ **Create a public engagement framework**

Council Priorities | 3/1/20 - 8/1/20

■ **Research who the silent majority is in Airdrie**

Council Priorities | 1/2/20 - 4/30/20

Functional Long-term Transportation Planning

Council Priorities

Description

The City will work to secure funding for a 40th Avenue interchange. Funding will be in place for construction of an underpass beneath the railroad tracks on Yankee Valley Boulevard in the next 4 years. The City will remove transportation barriers that may prevent businesses from locating in Airdrie. The City will look into options for relocating the weigh scales near Balzac.

Desired Result

1. Transportation is not a barrier to business locating in Airdrie.
2. Residents easily move around Airdrie as the population grows.

What will that look like:

- Move the weigh scales
- A letter of understanding from the Province saying we are on the funded list and will be built by x. Commitment from the Province.
- We've done everything possible to get the Province on side
- Overpass is built
- Opens up commercial building toward the airport; more viable for large-scale employers to actually build here. Impacts success of other priorities too, and moves the assessment split.
- Reduced congestion at rush hour
- Ease of movement for residents around Airdrie, particularly at Yankee Valley Boulevard. Congestion is relieved. There would be flow.
- Continued growth and industrial growth of Airdrie.

Status Update

Q1-20

In February 2020, the Province announced a funding commitment of \$10.1 million for an interim ramp onto QEII as part of the 2020-2021 Provincial budget.

In discussions with the Minister, it was confirmed that there was flexibility in how Provincial funding could be applied towards various aspects of the overall interchange project.

COVID-19 Impacts:

The pandemic has disrupted development of additional options for review and consideration by Council and Alberta Transportation.

If post-pandemic stimulus funding is announced, the 40th Avenue interchange project could be a possible candidate for inclusion, as the design is complete.

Recommendations

Q1-20

Continue to pursue funding opportunities.

Initiatives

40th Avenue Overpass

Council Priorities | 1/1/19 - 12/31/21

■ **Transportation Master Plan**
Council Priorities | 3/1/19 - 12/31/19

■ **Yankee Valley Boulevard Grade Separation**
Council Priorities | 1/1/19 - 12/31/21

■ **40th Avenue / 56th Avenue Interchanges**
Council Priorities | 1/1/19 - 12/31/21

■ **Provincial Advocacy and Regional Partnerships**
Council Priorities | 1/1/19 - 12/31/21

■ **000646-40th Avenue Interchange to Highway 2**
Capital Projects Office | 3/1/20 - 12/31/21

■ **000220-YVB CPR Grade Separation**
Capital Projects Office | 3/1/20 - 6/30/20

Attract, Retain and Grow Business/Industry

Council Priorities

Description

Locating more business in Airdrie will shift the tax base away from reliance on residential taxation. It will support residents' needs, both financial and social.

Desired Result

1. Airdrie has more non-residential tax revenue to meet residents' needs, with a target of a 75:25 residential vs. non-residential assessment split.
2. Residents work, live and play here.

What will that look like:

- Some large-scale employers and industry
- Seeing people use the businesses in our community more
- Well-paying jobs, diverse range of jobs
- Employment opportunities beyond what we have today
- A major player in the new lands
- Province and country know Airdrie is not a small town anymore
- Airdrie comes up in conversation, not just 'that place outside Calgary'

Status Update

Q1-20

COVID-19 Impacts:

The pandemic situation has shifted the focus from increasing non-residential tax base to business support and recovery

Local businesses were surveyed to gain an understanding of impacts and needs, and these results were presented to Council at the April 20, 2020 meeting.

- Action plans being developed

Initiatives underway

- A web page dedicated to business resources at www.airdrie.ca/businessresources
- Sharing learning opportunities (i.e. Bow Valley College webinars) with businesses
- Regular meetings with business support organizations including Airdrie Chamber, Community Futures Centre West, Bow Valley College, Academy of Learning, Rockyview & Wheatland Employment Services and Career Leap
- Bi-weekly meetings with federal and provincial government departments related to economic development
- Providing one-on-one assistance, referrals and encouragement to local businesses

Additional City relief measures put in place to support business

- Temporary financial measures - waiving or suspending late penalties and fees, suspending the industrial wastewater monitoring program and temporarily suspending surcharges

Recommendations

Q1-20

That Council endorse the change in direction, shifting from the planned goals of the economic strategy to initiatives and support measures aimed to assist the business recovery within Airdrie.

Staff will continue to explore opportunities to attract and grow business when the opportunity presents itself.

- Temporary changes to the sign bylaw have been endorsed by Council and allow more access to advertising opportunities
- Looking to local companies first for procurement opportunities

Initiatives

- **Development funding and financing strategy**
Council Priorities | 1/1/20 - 12/31/21
- **Right for Business - Customer service improvements**
Community Growth & Protective Services | 1/1/20 - 12/31/21
- **Placemaking Strategy**
Economic Development | 1/1/20 - 12/31/21
- **CRM for business customers**
Economic Development | 6/1/20 - 12/31/21
- **Tourism and visitor experience strategy**
Economic Development | 1/1/20 - 12/31/21
- **Develop an investment attraction strategy and marketing campaign**
Economic Development | 1/1/20 - 12/31/21
- **Develop and implement the COVID-19 business support and recovery plan**
Economic Development | 5/1/20 - 12/31/21
- **Edmonton Trail economic opportunity and land use study**
Planning and Development | 1/1/21 - 12/31/21
- **Develop abbreviated neighbourhood planning processes for the development cells within East Points CASP**
Planning and Development | 5/1/20 - 5/31/20

Revitalize Downtown

Council Priorities

Description

Complete the plan for downtown based on the engagement process, and determine a clear path forward. The City will develop strategic partnerships within the downtown. A revitalized downtown has more people living, shopping and spending money there. Businesses stay open in our downtown. Residents are proud of downtown Airdrie. It is an important part of Airdrie's brand, identity and economic development.

Desired Result

1. Residents go to downtown Airdrie.
2. Residents support the businesses.
3. Residents enjoy the downtown.

What will that look like:

- See new businesses, unique shops, see people downtown
- Businesses' traffic is going up; businesses are doing better
- Thriving downtown
- A defined downtown
- Walkability
- You have a reason to go downtown
- Hearing "Let's go downtown" instead of into Calgary
- Finishing downtown plan sooner than later, and implementing it
- More education for MPC, so new developments follow the plan

Status Update

Q1-20

Work is continuing on the Downtown Plan and completion is anticipated by end of Q3. Foundational work has been completed for key elements to support the plan over the last quarter, including the vision for the plan, principles for plan actions, and a greater understanding of small-town feel and how to incorporate it as part of downtown revitalization. Staff have also completed policies for many sections of the plan and have refined work on potential process and regulation incentives for redevelopment.

COVID-19 Impacts:

The pandemic has had only moderate impact on the development of the Downtown Plan. Staff continue to make this strategy a high priority and believe the goals to be in line with supporting community recovery.

Recommendations

Q1-20

That Council continues to move forward with this strategy. Revitalizing the downtown will support local business and economic recovery, as well as supporting the well-being of Airdrie citizens.

Initiatives

-  **Placemaking Strategy**
Economic Development | 1/1/20 - 12/31/21
-  **Downtown plan**
Planning and Development | 1/1/19 - 9/30/20

Increase Affordable Housing Options

Council Priorities

Description

Leverage existing housing agencies and organizations and partner with other levels of government to find new ways to help people access housing that is achievable on their income. This includes seniors, disabled citizens and those on low incomes.

Desired Result

More affordable housing units are built.

What will that look like:

- A new facility.
- Determine whether we are responsible financially, and what the Provincial/Federal government are responsible for. Determine our level of commitment.
- Find a unique way to do this. Be creative. Work with developers.
- Ideally, a short-term resolution for clients because they able to move on into market housing.
- Need a way to return money to the taxpayers.
- Costs of developing new facilities are funded by other levels of government or other funding mechanisms.
- Make developers include an affordable housing component.
- If 170 on the wait list today, less on the waitlist would show success.
- Increase in housing inventory.
- People don't need to go to Calgary for affordable housing.

Status Update

Q1-20

On January 27, the Priority Owner Team presented to Council the current state of the housing system in Airdrie and updated strategies to address the largest gaps in the community.

On February 3, the Provincial Minister of Seniors & Housing visited Airdrie to discuss the housing system in our city, and supports required from the Province to address the needs of the most vulnerable population.

On March 12, Administration met with Dean Lussier, Executive Director, Stakeholder Relations & Housing Strategies.

The Province indicated that the vehicle to respond to broader community housing needs is through its housing management body - Rocky View Foundation.

It is recommended that further discussion and a presentation of Airdrie's housing needs be presented to Rocky View Foundation. City staff requested that D. Lussier or a member of his team present to Council in the future to inform them about the role of the ministry in addressing housing needs in Airdrie through its Housing Management Body (HMB) Rocky View Foundation.

Recommendations

Q1-20

Staff will be developing a Housing Strategy Report to guide Council in making decisions on short and long-term actions to increase affordable housing options. This Housing Strategy Report will build on current state assessments of housing needs and provide evidence-based approaches (what works) to increase affordable housing options through government advocacy, investment in housing projects that yield best public benefits, and use of Council's ability to create a regulatory environment that supports the long-term development of a diverse supply of below-market housing. This Housing Strategy Report will tie into Council's priorities on attraction of business/industry by exploring options that will provide affordable below-market housing for target industries. It will use evidence to inform types of below-market housing that would support downtown revitalization.

Staff assigned to this priority have been redirected to manage the City's Emergency Social Services Plan. Due to this disruption, Staff anticipate bringing this report to Council in 4th Quarter, 2020.

COVID-19 Impacts:

Staff assigned to this priority have been redirected to manage the City's Emergency Social Services Plan, and as such there is a delay in carrying out the work plan.

Initiatives

■ **Provincial advocacy**
Council Priorities | 2/1/20 - 12/31/20

■ **Current state research and analysis**
Council Priorities | Completed 3/16/20