

November 20, 2019

To: Members
Priorities and Planning Committee

Re: Official Community Plan Five-Year Review

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Part A – Citywide Plan of *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw 2013-48* be amended as set out in Appendices A and B to this report.
2. That the City Solicitor be directed to prepare the necessary bylaw to amend *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw 2013-48* to reflect the changes set out in Appendices A and B to this report.
3. That this report be forwarded to the December 16, 2019 meeting of City Council for approval, to allow adequate time for advertising of the required public notice for the bylaw.

CONCLUSION

The Administration has completed the first five-year review of *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw 2013-48* (OCP). Outcomes of the review include a snapshot of successes and challenges of implementation as well as next steps on implementing the OCP. Proposed policy amendments to improve the plan are also presented for consideration.

At the outset of this review it was determined that this would be a minor review of the plan as the plan is still in the early stages of implementing the OCP which was adopted in 2013.

BACKGROUND

Design Regina was adopted by City Council in December 2013 and received ministerial approval in March 2014. The OCP's implementation section, called 'Realizing the Plan', includes a policy requirement that the City "review the Plan every five years, using the eight Community Priorities and Plan goals as guidance" to "ensure the Plan remains current and relevant over its life." This report summarizes the findings and recommended changes resulting from the City's first five-year review of the OCP.

City Council also provided direction at their meeting on February 27, 2017 (CR17-13) to review the OCP office development policies as part of this project:

- 2) That the next Office Policy review occur with the *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2013-48* five-year review in 2018.

DISCUSSION

OCP Review

The OCP is the City's highest-level policy plan guiding long-term growth and change in the community to a population of 300,000 and beyond. Development of the OCP required significant involvement by City Administration, the public and external stakeholders. A project was initiated in 2018 to undertake the first five-year review of the OCP. The plan is a long-term 25-year plan that set the policy direction/vision for the growth and development in Regina. Compared to the broad engagement used in creating the OCP, the focus of this project has been to assess whether current approaches to delivering the policies are on track to achieve the vision of the OCP.

Since Design Regina was adopted, City Administration has been implementing the OCP through the creation of master plans for various services, the development of two corporate strategic plans and through day-to-day actions that deliver on the goals and policies in the OCP. Progress to implement the OCP has been tracked and reported annually through the City's Annual Report.

The intent of this project was to:

- Evaluate implementation progress to date including barriers, successes, opportunities and challenges; and
- Identify minor improvements to address now (i.e. amendments) and future work that may be out of scope for the 5-year review but will be important to carry out over the next five years.

Implementation Highlights

Major implementation achievements of the first five years include:

- **Master Plans:** The past five years have seen the development of master plans for culture, transportation, recreation, water and wastewater. These subservient plans are created based on guidance from the OCP and provide the next layer of more detailed policy and actions. Master plans will help the City understand both the immediate cost of delivery of the service but also how the service must grow or evolve to serve a growing population, including the financial implications. Master plans are a key input to the Long-Range Financial Model, the primary tool for understanding the financial sustainability of our services.
- **Corporate Strategic Plan:** The City's strategic plan takes the guiding policy in the OCP and turns it into City actions and how the City manages its business. The most recently developed strategic plan titled *Making Choices Today to Secure Tomorrow* focusses on establishing foundational mechanisms so that the far-reaching vision in the OCP can be achieved. The plan outlines the necessary advancements required over the next four years to achieve long-term delivery of effective, reliable services in a way that balances the community needs and wants articulated in the OCP.

- **Secondary and Concept Plans:** Design Regina introduced the concept of developing complete neighbourhoods and includes policies guiding the development and implementation of complete neighbourhoods. It is one of the eight Community Priorities to “create safe and inclusive neighbourhoods that are easy to get around and that have a mix of housing choices, amenities, and services.” Numerous secondary plans and concept plans have been approved and planned to be complete neighbourhoods (e.g. Westerra, Coopertown, Southeast Neighbourhood) in accordance with the policies. Secondary plans comprise Part B of the OCP and provide the realization of the vision of the OCP at a community or neighbourhood level.
- **Long Range Financial Planning:** Since the approval of Design Regina, the City has been undertaking long-range financial planning work that directly responds to the Community Priority to ‘achieve long-term financial viability.’ Key initiatives of work have included the development of a long-range financial planning framework and supporting model and the reserve review. As a result, the City can better understand the impacts of financial decisions to address and ensure financial viability and sustainability.
- **Phasing and Financing Plan:** A few policy amendments have been made to Design Regina since it was adopted. The most significant of which has been the inclusion of phasing and financing policies for new neighbourhoods. The final phasing and financing plan, developed as part of the Service Agreement Fee (SAF) and Development Levy Policy review, and now a part of the OCP, supports development of complete neighbourhoods by limiting the number of neighbourhoods developed at any one time ensuring that development is sequence in a cost effective and compatible way that considers impacts on municipal infrastructure and services.

A comprehensive inventory of actions that have been carried out to implement policies in the OCP is attached as Appendix C and is also available online at Regina.ca. The implementation inventory is updated annually.

Several policies in the OCP are directly measurable. Progress on these policy targets are also tracked annually within the City’s Annual Report and published online along with the other OCP implementation actions. They include policy targets related to intensification, population of the City Centre, density of new neighbourhoods, office development and plan monitoring (Appendix D).

Implementation Challenges

Intensification

A key policy target of the OCP is that 70 per cent of the population growth will be directed to new neighbourhoods on the edges of the city, while 30 per cent of the growth will be accommodated through intensification of existing built up areas. Intensification supports sustainability in our community by:

- Maximizing use of existing infrastructure, including pipes, roads and parks;

- Supporting use of existing facilities, services and amenities, such as fire stations, libraries, recreation and schools;
- Fostering access to more and better options for utilizing various modes of transportation and moving around our community;
- Providing opportunity to integrate housing options for people of all ages and stages of life into our established neighbourhoods; and
- Revitalizing neighbourhoods.

The rate of growth through intensification has been on a downward trend since the OCP was approved in 2014. From 2014-2018 the cumulative intensification rate since the adoption of the OCP is approximately 13 per cent. Causes for a reduced intensification rate include ample supply of serviced land in new greenfield neighbourhoods, infrastructure barriers to developing infill and a downturn in the economy.

The City anticipates that the intensification rate will vary from year-to-year as has been the case in the past. The longer the rate stays below the 30 per cent target, the more challenging it will be to achieve the target. As an important step in supporting intensification, the City analyzed regulatory, environmental, social and economic barriers to private sector redevelopment of various types of underutilized sites throughout Regina through the Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy (ULIS), which was adopted by Council on July 29, 2019. Implementation of the recommended actions within ULIS will be critical to encouraging, incentivizing and removing barriers for infill development and intensification.

Major infill developments will also increase the intensification rate. The Railyard Revitalization Initiative is an opportunity to bring new residents to the City's core which would increase the intensification rate. Lastly, Neighbourhood & Corridor Plans in mature parts of the city will identify specific sites that are suitable for intensification at a neighbourhood scale through engagement with residents in these areas. Once approved, these plans will provide greater certainty to residents and local developers on where and how intensification could occur.

Pace of Implementation and Challenges with Monitoring

The City has spent much of its time in the first five years of implementing the OCP developing master plans and strategies to deliver on it. This is critical foundational work that must be done in order to advance the intended OCP results. This work has helped the City build a greater understanding of the opportunities and the challenges of meeting the vision outlined in the OCP and will help to pace the work in a way that is realistic, affordable, and achievable.

At the same time, the City has faced significant financial constraints – not only has the economy slowed since the initial adoption of the OCP, that slow-down has resulted in changes to the level of financial support from other levels of government. In this environment, the City's work through the strategic plan is largely focused on improving the financial sustainability of the services the City delivers and addressing how we deliver our service most efficiently. This work is critical to engaging the residents of Regina in a discussion to find the right balance between the priorities outlined in the OCP and affordability. Once this direction is clear, the City will have plans in place to pursue the vision as intended.

Another challenge to monitoring implementation is that the high-level nature of the policies means that most of them are not directly measurable. This is addressed through the creation of master plans, which are the primary means to realize the OCP. Master plans include measurable policies and actions and the necessary framework to deliver on the OCP.

Proposed Amendments

A major component of the five-year review was policy analysis and review to see which policies are on track and to identify other areas of improvement. The review considered policy amendments to Part A – Citywide Plan of the OCP; changes to OCP Part B – Secondary Plans was out-of-scope for the project.

Proposed amendments can be categorized as: 1) minor housekeeping; 2) map changes; 3) provincially legislated changes; and 4) office development policy changes. High-level policy gaps in the current plan that require future work were also identified. A full list of the proposed amendments, including rationale, is provided in Appendix A.

Minor Housekeeping Updates

Numerous amendments are proposed to improve the intent and clarity of policies. Proposed changes range from correcting minor typos to adding language to clarify the intent of the policy to make it easier for users.

Map Updates

Many of the proposed map changes are also housekeeping in nature (e.g. updating city limits); however, they are worth discussing separately to highlight more notable changes to Map 1 – Growth Plan as follows:

- Addition of three new urban centres in existing areas of the city (Grasslands Commercial District, Northgate Mall and Southland Mall sites) based on their future redevelopment potential. This change is consistent with the definition of urban centres and in support of OCP policies that speak to new and existing urban centres and corridors.
- Removal of the Wascana Parkway as an urban corridor due to its lack of development potential and because part of it is outside the City’s jurisdiction within Wascana Centre.
- Replacing the designation of “New Mixed-Use Neighbourhood (300k)” with “New Neighbourhood (300k)” since all neighbourhoods are encouraged and planned to have a mix of uses and there is no difference in policy between the area with this current designation and other new neighbourhoods.
- Replacing the designation of “New Neighbourhood (300k) 2016 Amendment” with “New Neighbourhood (300k)” located within the southeast portion of the Regina Bypass. This area does not warrant a separate designation from other new neighbourhoods.

Another map change of note is to update Map 2 – Regina Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). The Regina CMA boundary changed with the 2016 census to include the RM of Lajord southeast of the city.

Lastly, a new Map 1c is proposed for inclusion in the OCP to clearly delineate intensification areas of the city from new greenfield areas.

Revised maps are attached as Appendix B to this report.

Provincially Legislated Amendments

In 2018, *The Planning & Development Act, 2007* was amended to include new requirements for OCPs to address planning in proximity to railways and policies regarding school sites on municipal reserve (MR). Proposed changes related to school sites have been created in consultation with the Ministry of Education and local school divisions in accordance with legislation. Design Regina already has an existing policy (11.7) related to employing appropriate setbacks from rail while it is addressed more specifically on a site by site basis through the creation of secondary plans and concept plans for new neighbourhoods where rail facilities are present (e.g. Westerra Neighbourhood Plan).

Office Development Policy Minor Amendments

In 2012, the City established OCP policies guiding the development of office buildings for medium (1,000 – 4,000 m²) and major (>4,000 m²) scale office developments. The intent of the policy is to support the downtown as the city's primary business centre while allowing some limited suburban office and office uses that might not typically locate in the downtown. When the policies were established, City Council directed Administration to undertake an annual review of the office development policies (Section D5, Goal 5). The most recent update to City Council was in February of 2017. At the time, City Council decided that this would be the last update on the office policy in advance of the OCP five-year review project.

As part of the five-year review, Administration has consulted a stakeholder group of office industry experts seeking their input on the existing policies to help Administration better understand the implications of the policies on Regina's office market.

Based on the evaluation and understating of development trends the Administration has identified proposed amendments in Appendix A. These amendments are summarized as follows:

- Heritage Conversions (7.29.1): The intent of this policy is to support the conversion and adaptive re-use of any heritage buildings in the city. As it is written in the OCP, the policy could be interpreted as only applying to heritage conversions in the Warehouse District. Therefore, the policies should be separated into two separate sub-policies under 7.29 to clarify the intent, which was to promote potential conversion of heritage buildings as adaptive reuse to office.

- Regina Airport Lands (7.29.3): The existing policies include an exception clause that allows medium scale office developments (1,000 – 4,000 m²) on Regina Airport Lands, which is outside of City jurisdiction. A proposed change would replace the existing policy with a more general one about collaborating with local authorities and municipalities on the development of complementary development policies.
- Urban Centres: Addition of new urban centres in existing major commercial nodes of the city to Map 1 – Growth Plan and Map 6 – Office Areas. This is a general OCP change and it has implications for the office policies since medium office is allowed in both Office Areas and urban centres under certain conditions outlined in the policies. This will not have an impact in the near term while the vacancy rate for the downtown is above 6.5% (OCP policy 7.33 requirement).
- Industrial Offices (NEW 7.29.7): Consideration of industrial offices, on a case by case basis, as a discretionary use. During consultation on the policies several stakeholders requested changes to allow greater flexibility for industrial offices that are not appropriate downtown. This amendment will allow Council to consider applications to determine whether the proposed development will have a negative impact on the downtown and allow Council to accommodate industrial users who are not appropriate to locate in a downtown context.

Through this process, project applicants would be required to demonstrate that the proposed office use would not compete with the downtown office market. For example, there are industrial offices that may require warehousing space, compound space for fleet vehicles or storage of materials that are better suited to industrial areas of the city and that are currently restricted by the policies. The addition of this policy will enable consideration of these types of offices at the discretion of Council. However, Administration intends to bring back a report by the end of Q1 of 2020 with the appropriate zoning amendments to further support this OCP policy amendment and will include further engagement with the office industry.

- Other Minor Changes: Other proposed improvements are included such as cleaning up the definitions of medium and major office by changing the wording from “purpose-built” to “principal use” to match the related policies, which cover conversions and redevelopments; and adding a definition for Office Area.

Policy Gaps

Through analysis of the policies, Administration identified missing policies or definitions. One example is that Design Regina was approved before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action were released. The Cultural Plan includes policies, objectives and actions regarding the TRC Calls to Action, however, there is a need for acknowledgement in the Plan and the inclusion of an overarching policy in the OCP to guide more detailed policies. Administration intends to initiate a process, beyond the scope of this project, to engage Indigenous leaders and other partners in the community on potential language to include within the OCP.

Implementation Next Steps

As the City continues to implement the OCP, major pieces of work over the upcoming years include:

- Development of remaining master plans for services (e.g. parks, fire, transit);
- Implementation of the new Zoning Bylaw – the main tools to implement the OCP from a land use and development perspective;
- Implementation of the Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy to support intensification;
- Launching a neighbourhood planning program to create new or update existing neighbourhood plans for mature neighbourhoods;
- Engaging Indigenous partners on potential language to include within the OCP;
- Addressing identified policy issues that went beyond scope of project such as those that require a separate project; and
- Continuing to monitor progress on policies and update as needed.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

None with respect to this report.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

The OCP's implementation section calls for the OCP to be 'a living plan' and that we must "ensure the Plan remains current and relevant over its life"

Section E – Realizing the Plan,

Goal 3: To ensure the OCP is a living plan, the following policies provided direction for the five-year review:

- 14.15 Review the Plan every five years, using the eight Community Priorities and Plan goals as guidance, and include:
 - 14.15.1 Public and stakeholder engagement and City cross-departmental involvement;
 - 14.15.2 Consideration of Plan implementation progress, barriers, successes, failures, challenges and opportunities; and
 - 14.15.3 Identification of amendments, mechanisms, or approaches to continuously improve the Plan.

The OCP also provides further guidance on community engagement as part of these reviews:

- 14.13 Ensure that public engagement is completed and integrated as part of the five-year review process as per Policy 14.15.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

None with respect to this report.

COMMUNICATIONS

Various methods of communication were undertaken to notify and solicit feedback on the OCP five-year review. These included:

- Information posted on the City's website;
- A public survey sent out to subscribers of the Design Regina emails soliciting feedback on implementation progress;
- Consultation with office industry stakeholders on the OCP office development policies;
- Public open house held on September 11, 2019; and
- Input from City departments on potential amendments and implementation progress.

Public Survey

A public survey was sent out to 571 individuals who are identified as Design Regina stakeholders and signed up to receive updates on the OCP. This included an opportunity for new residents to sign up for the survey as well. A total of 187 respondents completed the survey. The survey was open from March 25 until April 7. A summary of survey responses is provided in Appendix E.

Key findings from the survey are as follows:

- Most respondents were somewhat to very aware of the eight Community Priorities identified in the OCP.
- Respondents were most satisfied with progress toward the Community Priorities of environmental sustainability and developing complete neighbourhoods; they were least satisfied with progress on the priorities of fostering economy prosperity and supporting the availability of diverse housing options.
- The survey also provided an opportunity for a number of open-ended responses which ranged from City efforts directly related to the OCP to broader concerns about City services and service levels.

Stakeholders

Proposed policy changes were circulated to the RM of Sherwood for review and comment as per OCP policy 3.15. The RM did not have any comments about the proposed amendments.

Affected provincial ministries were consulted on the proposed changes including the Ministry of Education on changes related to school sites.

A workshop was held on February 28, 2019 with office industry experts to discuss how the office development policies have been working. Written feedback was also solicited. Both feedback from the workshop and written feedback were considered in the draft amendments to make minor adjustments to the policies.

Public Open House

A public open house was held at City Hall on September 11, 2019. The event was attended by 34 residents, as well as members of Regina Planning Commission, four City Councillors and some media. This come-and-go format event was intended to provide residents with an opportunity to learn about the OCP five-year review project and provide feedback on implementation progress, plans for the next five years and the proposed amendments.

The City Council date and associated public hearing for the OCP amendments will be advertised.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

City Council's approval is required, pursuant to Part IV Section 39 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*. The amendments, if adopted by City Council, will require ministerial approval before they come into force.

Respectfully submitted

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Fred Searle, A. Exec. Director, City Planning & Community Dev.



11/6/2019

Diana Hawryluk, Executive Director, City Planning & Community Dev.

11/8/2019