



Bob van Wegen & Taryn Hayes

Plan It Calgary Update

The new Calgary Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP), aka “Plan It Calgary”, become effective on April 1. Federation planner Bob van Wegen is among a group of Council appointees on the Plan It Implementation Committee who have been working to understand implementation needs; to identify and clarify issues around definitions, interpretation, and planning and application protocols; and to put in place stakeholder forums and procedures to sustain the plans over time.

A report went to Council on February 22 identifying “phase one” items requiring resolution prior to April 1, “phase two” items by the end of 2010 (including detailing community consultation processes), and “phase three” items beyond that. One product will be a User Guide, a public document that will be available (in its first incarnation) later in March. The group also developed terms of reference for a Sustainment Committee with broad group representation that will be appointed by June to succeed the Implementation Committee. Until then, the Implementation Committee will be considering “initiatives to encourage ongoing, broad community discussion and engagement” around implementation of the MDP and CTP, and will discuss how to promote innovation.

The work will help to answer how implementation will affect existing communities and how they will be involved in local planning decisions. The nature of the sustainment committee, the forthcoming “community discussion and engagement piece” and the public material that will be available sets the stage for a much broader discussion and stewardship of our citywide plans going forward.

Changes to infill rules go into effect March 1

At the February 8 public hearing, City Council accepted changes proposed by City planners that expand the “permitted” envelope for contextual single-detached dwellings; they also rejected some problematic changes that had been proposed in December by Calgary Planning Commission. The envelope for “permitted” infill houses is expanding effective March 1. The major change is probably the allowance of a second floor to go as far back as first floor. Communities and neighbours will be consulted on

fewer infill houses under the new rules, and permitted-contextual houses will not be subject to appeal. As of this writing, the City was preparing training material to explain the changes to industry and community.

On a city-wide basis up to half of the single-detached infills are expected to fit within the expanded contextual envelope, as opposed to about 5% currently. The remainder are discretionary and will be circulated for comment and subject to appeal. The reduction in circulations will be most noticeable in the inner city, which have been reviewing most infills since rules for the “Established Communities” were put in place about 20 years ago. There is also concern in these communities that ARPs and the Infill Guidelines will not apply for permitted houses. For the rest of Calgary, virtually all infills were permitted prior to the establishment of contextual rules in 2008. If you are outside the old Established area you will still be circulated more applications than you would have seen prior to 2008, but probably fewer than under the more recent rules. The City will still mail out information on the “permitted” applications, but as a courtesy only. The “contextual” rules do not apply in the new Developing Areas, where all houses are permitted.

Now that the rules have been settled for the time being, we can expect progress on updates to the corresponding Infill Guidelines, which apply to all the “discretionary” applications in the established area.

This is all part of the ongoing adjustment to the new land use bylaw, including responding to workload challenges at city hall and a desire in the City and industry to reduce application requirements for what are deemed to be minor and modest low density infills. The proof will be in the pudding, and community associations should keep a close eye on the performance of the new contextual envelope as it will be reviewed again, after a year of experience. Also, it is highly likely that the City will pursue the creation of a permitted contextual envelope for attached/duplex developments in the coming months. Stay tuned.

Make sure your Land Use Bylaw binder is up to date

Hardcopies of the new Land Use Bylaw have been distributed to most community associations over the past two years. Because the Land Use Bylaw is constantly being updated and amended, it is important to check the City’s website periodically to ensure that you print out and insert the most up-to-date amendments. Please visit www.calgary.ca/landusebylaw - the updates are organized by date.

Secondary Suites update

The bylaw changes regarding secondary suites described in the February newsletter are expected to proceed to a City Council public hearing on April 12. In the meantime,

the City's Affordable Housing office and their consultants are proceeding with research in the hope of creating some framework policy on secondary suites. Community focus groups in mid-February were well-attended. An interim report is likely to go to Council in March, and further consultation is expected in the spring.

Communities collaborate on 50th Avenue redevelopment plan

A plan to bury the power lines on the north side of 50th Ave SW between Elbow Dr and Macleod Trail has sparked controversy and motivated surrounding communities. 50th Ave SW borders Elboya Heights, Windsor Park, and Britannia, and is recognized to function as a neighbourhood corridor in Plan It Calgary. Once the power lines are buried, the future development of the land is certain.

Wanting to be a proactive force in shaping the development of the area, a resident committee made up of representatives from Elboya Heights, Windsor Park, and Britannia formed and approached the Federation to help them pursue a plan/vision and community-based engagement process. Rather than simply opposing change or reacting, the communities are interested in proposing alternative futures for the site based on what the community **does** want.

At the end of January, the Federation led a tri-communities visioning process to establish a common vision for 50th Ave. The process was used to determine what the residents would support in terms of commercial, housing and green space redevelopment in that area.

In order to develop a vision for 50th Ave, the Federation, on behalf of the tri-communities group, has enlisted the help of a University of Calgary Urban Studies class. The students will take a broad theoretical perspective, will research best practices for quality redevelopment, and will come up with

a high-level generalized concept (or concepts) of the 50th Ave area. The students plan to present their project to the communities and others at an open house in April.

PIP course on SDAB - March 11

Learn about the appeals process and how to make good planning arguments in and effective presentations to the SDAB. Partners In Planning (PIP) is a popular and award-winning series of free courses put on by the Federation and the City to educate community members about the planning process. The SDAB is a core course – three cores and one elective are required to complete the PIP certificate. FREE, but you must register. Coffee and snacks provided. Saturday March 13. Doors and sign-up at 8:30 am, course from 9 am - 12:30 pm. Wildwood Community Association 4411 Spruce Drive SW. Register ASAP at www.calgarycommunities.com > workshops and events.

Jane's Talk: Jane Jacobs Reconsidered - March 14

Explore the legacy of this legendary urban writer through film and discussion. Learn about Jane's Walk, an annual series of free neighbourhood walking tours in early May*. In partnership with the Calgary Foundation, the Federation, and the Library. 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Sunday, March 14 John Dutton Theatre Central Library. No registration required. (*If you would like to lead a Jane's Walk in your community, contact Julie Black at the Calgary Foundation.)

Orientation to Planning Process and Issues - April 7

This workshop orients community association planning reps to the Community Guide to the Planning Process. The small-group workshop will help participants get up to speed on the 184-page Guide and is an opportunity to discuss issues with Federation planners and colleagues from other community associations. The workshop complements the PIP program and will count as an elective. Free but you must register; space is very limited. April 7 at the Federation office, 1609 – 14th Street SW. 7 – 9pm. Register online at www.calgarycommunities.com > Workshops and Events.

Methadone clinic update

In the wake of last year's controversy, City planners have been investigating land use issues surrounding methadone clinics. A recent City report indicated that from a zoning perspective, methadone clinics can't be separated from other kinds of medical clinics and recommended no changes to the land use bylaw. The report advocates the "Good Neighbour Agreement" as a means of establishing positive relationships between methadone clinics (and other controversial uses) and their neighbours.



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