

Section 4

Implementation

Implementation Overview

Successful implementation will be what determines the success of this Area Redevelopment Plan and of Downtown Airdrie as a whole. The following sections set up future steps and coordination that will be necessary to guide implementation efforts, summarize key actions and initiatives that are being brought forward for implementation with the Downtown Plan, and outline the required steps and timing for monitoring and updating the Plan in the future, and setting out measures of success for the Downtown initiative overall.

This Plan is adopted by bylaw and is required to be amended by bylaw in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*. The appendices and supporting documents are intended to give context to the Plan and guide interpretation but have no legal effect. The City retains the discretion to determine when an amendment is required and when wording can bear an interpretation or when specific measurements can be varied without need for an amendment.

DRAFT

4.01 A Collective Approach to Removing Development Barriers

Preamble:

Council's statement of success and the principles of the Downtown Plan both highlight the importance of making the downtown an attractive place for businesses. Planning requirements need to follow suit, and must protect the public good while allowing new uses to locate within the downtown. This requires a delicate balance between clear rules that are easily understood and flexibility for those rules to adapt with changing trends, circumstances, and new business models.

This is not solely the responsibility of the City. All parties involved in redevelopment projects and growth of the downtown have a responsibility to prioritize open communication and proactive discussion to identify and resolve potential concerns.

One area where we can address these considerations is to improve process for Development Permit applications, especially changes of use within existing buildings in the downtown. Change of Use Development Permit applications can take weeks of lead time and typically do not require a robust planning review of the file beyond parking requirements, as the rest of the site is already established. Over the last three years, the City has processed 42 "Change of Use" Development Permit applications within the plan boundary. This number shows that changes to these practices can make a clear and measureable difference by facilitating the process for businesses to open in the downtown or for existing businesses to make adjustments over time.

Engagement on the Downtown Plan also identified that there could be significant benefit for administration to establish a streamlined process of managing Development Permits, pre-emptively working through obstacles and ensuring that resourcing is in place to review and render decisions quickly. Doing so would ensure that there is minimal lead time through this critical part of the planning and approvals process.

All these elements point to improvements that could allow for more flexibility for businesses in the area. Removing barriers for these types of development reviews would contribute to making downtown Airdrie a location of opportunity for adaptive and innovative business models.

Objective:

The objective is to establish processes for Development Permit applications in the downtown that facilitates and removes barriers for applicants while ensuring that the City is protecting the public interest and preventing negative impacts.

Principles:

Removing barriers for Development Permits is entirely about putting [The Right Rules and Process](#) into place to support the downtown. Promoting these types of initiatives is also a key component to stimulate new investment and redevelopment in the downtown, contributing to [Everyone's Success](#).

Policies:

1. New Development Permit applications in the downtown should be supported where such proposals do not conflict with any other policies within this plan.
2. The underlying approach to development in the downtown is to keep open lines of communication in order to:
 - a. Establish and continue to refine appropriate development regulations
 - b. Remove barriers to redevelopment

Municipal Actions:

1. Council shall suspend requirements for Development Permit applications, and associated parking standards, to allow for changes of Land Use in established buildings within the downtown in accordance with Bylaw No. XX/2020.
2. Concurrent with Plan adoption, Council shall adopt Resolution No. XX/2020, that creates a streamlined Development Permit review processes that will apply to new Development Permit applications within the downtown and establishes its defined level of service standard.
3. Council shall direct Administration to prepare Land Use Bylaw amendments, within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, to define the extent or circumstances where exemptions from Development Permit applications can be granted for minor alterations, additions, and renovations to existing buildings.
4. Council shall direct Administration to prepare, within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, Phase II Environmental Site Assessment information for interested owners as part of City-led incentives for redevelopment
5. Council shall direct Administration to conduct an analysis of Development Permit applications, within 18 months of the adoption of this plan, and determine initiatives for proactive support of applications within the downtown. This analysis should outline:
 - a. prospective role(s) of Administration
 - b. proactive measures necessary
 - c. resourcing requirements, and
 - d. anticipated return on investment.
6. Council shall direct Administration to work collaboratively with the existing business community, landowners, and prospective developers to maintain open lines of communication and ensure that planning regulations are best supporting downtown revitalization efforts.