



**CITY OF CALGARY
URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (UDI)
CALGARY**

Outline and Tentative Plan Approval Process Review

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W e s t e r n M a n a g e m e n t C o n s u l t a n t s

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In September 2006, the City of Calgary, Development and Building Approvals Business Unit in partnership with the Urban Development Institute - Calgary (UDI), identified the need to undertake a work program that would result in an improvement to the Outline and Tentative Plan application and approval processes. Through its own review, the City of Calgary had determined process enhancements were required for Outline plan (including land use) and Tentative Plan applications, which would benefit both applicants and the City. As well, UDI had concluded that improvement in how the applicants engage in the process was also required. An agreement between the City and UDI concerning development standards also contributed to an understanding of the need to review the application and approval processes to benefit both internal and external stakeholders.

The project, therefore, required an external third party to facilitate a common understanding of the development process between UDI and the City of Calgary and to aid in advancing the key recommendations. Western Management Consultants was engaged to facilitate the review of the processes and commenced a work program to engage stakeholders in a discussion of the primary issues and concerns that are impeding a productive working relationship between City departments and the UDI and its members.

Development application and approval processes are administered and managed by the Development and Building Approvals section of the Calgary Planning Department. In 1997 the Corporate Planning Applications Group (CPAG) made up of representatives from Transportation, Engineering, Parks and Planning was formed to streamline the review and approval of development applications. CPAG was created as a single point of contact between the City and development community to ensure that a corporate perspective was applied to the review and approval of development applications. Consultation with a cross section of CPAG team members was required to identify areas for improvement as viewed from the municipal perspective.

At present, the UDI represents approximately ninety percent of all individuals and or companies involved in property development in Calgary. Consultation with a cross section of UDI members was therefore expected to yield information concerning how external stakeholders engage in the application and approval



processes and how meaningful change could be made to current City processes to benefit all developers regardless of whether they are UDI members or not.

At the outset it must be noted the Outline and Tentative Plan processes have been reviewed a number of times and incremental process improvements have been instituted. For instance, the UDI/CPAG Taskforce noted in an Information bulletin dated September 15, 2006 that positive steps had been taken by the City such as:

- A standardized set of comments for applications.
- The discouragement of subjective/personal comments.
- A directive to eliminate conflicting comments by different City departments.
- The insistence on complete applications.
- The ability to check the status of applications on the Vista system.
- More productive pre-application meetings with file managers and lead planners in attendance, including formal responses to written questions from the applicant.

Stakeholders have, however, continued to express concern and frustration over a lack of progress towards a consistent and timely set of application and approval processes. The time has arrived to implement needed change to benefit all stakeholders.

Early in the research phase of the project, the consultants determined changes had recently been made to the Tentative Plan application processes for the electronic submission of conforming tentative plans. Given the changes implemented in mid-2006 had involved some consultation with UDI and an extensive process review had been undertaken by CPAG staff, the consultants recommended to the Steering Committee that research for this engagement should focus on the processing of Outline Plan applications only. This action was supported by the high degree of stakeholder dissatisfaction with the Outline Plan approval process and the need to allow the new Tentative Plan application and approval process to mature before further review was undertaken. The Steering Committee concurred with this observation and the consultants focused the review on Outline Plan application and approval processes. Notwithstanding this decision, stakeholders did provide a number of comments on the current state of the ePlans process for conforming Tentative Plans but generally they were prepared to work with the new processes.



Important Conclusions from Stakeholder Consultation Process

Through the stakeholder consultation process, stakeholders identified seven major areas that could further improve the present Outline and Tentative plan approval processes:

1. There needs to be greater respect and understanding between the parties and a renewed focus on building relationships and consensus between the CPAG group and UDI members and consultants. The relationship needs to be less adversarial.
2. The policies adopted in Area Structure Plans must be clear and precise to allow Outline Plans to serve as tools for implementation of those policy directives.
3. There needs to be greater consistency and clarity in how City policies are applied. City policies should be clearer – minimum standards need to be confirmed as do areas where greater flexibility may be applicable. For example, the City needs to clarify major policy areas such as (higher density, transit-oriented development, or lower density development that maintains current road allowances). If there is consistency in standards as well as acceptance by all parties that a complete application is mandatory, there will be no need for exceptions to the processing of applications such as a “fast lane” approach that was suggested by a number of external stakeholders to expedite processing and approvals.
4. Outline Plan applications continue to be submitted without all of the required information. This is causing a problem for City staff as they attempt to commence the review process and comply with performance standards.
5. Someone needs to be in charge of the process and the dispute resolution mechanism needs to be appropriately communicated and applied.
6. The Pre-application process as it currently operates is lengthening the approval timelines and experienced developers are questioning the need for a process that adds little or no value particularly when the development meets all current development standards and specifications.



7. The City is in need of more staff resources that are both experienced and well trained to handle present and projected workloads. Personnel will need adequate mentoring, training and direction. If innovation is important to new development then staff will need guidance and training in this area and direction must be given so staff will know when it is okay to take a risk.

Recommendations

Following a review of background information, a series of 34 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in CPAG work groups, UDI members and consultants, one elected member of the Calgary Planning Commission, several external stakeholders, and three focus group sessions with City and UDI stakeholders, 21 recommendations were identified for process improvements. The recommendations are listed under the headings identified in the Project Terms of Reference.

A. Vision and Goals of Outline and Tentative Plan Processes

1. That the City and UDI through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should reaffirm that both parties are dedicated to producing quality urban development in Calgary. The goal of both parties can simply be described as achieving timely and thorough review that results in attractive development that is economical to build and to maintain.
2. That the UDI and CPAG Manager pursue a communication strategy that will continually inform practitioners, reviewing agencies, decision making bodies, media and the general public about the development process in Calgary. The existing CPAG Quarterly Newsletter could serve as one platform for this endeavor recognizing the multitude of stakeholders and their unique information requirements. Performance outcomes could be reported in a manner that allows a layperson to understand how the development approval process works and how performance is measured. This strategy would focus on specific target audiences, including City staff, elected officials, UDI members and consultants, other developers who are not members of UDI and the general public. The communication message should identify the facilitation and regulatory functions involved in the development process and should illustrate how current challenges are being jointly addressed by the City and development industry. The message to stakeholders should acknowledge that coordination



and cooperation between the parties produces better outcomes. To showcase improvements in the local development process for the public at large, the strategy could use mass media including local cable television; newspaper inserts, and direct mail to target audiences.

B. Defining Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

3. That all parties acknowledge the Director of Development and Building Approvals as the owner of the Outline and Tentative Plan application and approval processes. The UDI should designate a member of the Board to serve as a liaison with the Director of Development and Building Approvals on all matters pertaining to CPAG processes. These two individuals should be responsible for ensuring a dialogue between the City and development industry stakeholders on all matters relating to application and approval processes and establishment and amendment of standards for Outline and Tentative Plans.
4. It is understood that the development process is a continuum guided by a number of interrelated plans which move from the very general (high level) to the very specific. The highest level of planning direction comes from the Municipal Development /Regional Policy Plans, flowing through to Area Structure Plans, Outline Plans and finally to Tentative Plans/subdivision. The Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI must confirm the requirements for a complete Outline Plan application and then must do the same for the Tentative Plan process, and finally for engineering drawings. This will ensure that the proper information is submitted at the proper time and at the appropriate level of detail. Unless otherwise agreed to by both parties, the general level of information for an Outline Plan application should relate to general land use, major roadway system, open space, and basic utilities.
5. That changes to the information requirements for Outline Plan applications as identified in the joint focus group session held on January 18, 2007 as listed in Appendix D of this report be implemented. This will reduce the amount of time required to process an Outline Plan application while recognizing that detailed information that has previously been requested at the Outline Plan stage will be required at a latter point in the review and approval process. The parties must respect that while detailed construction information may not be required at the Outline Plan stage, it will be required at the engineering drawing stage.



6. The Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI should confirm a protocol to insure new standards proposed by either party are fully reviewed by both parties prior to adoption. The protocol should accommodate an annual review of all standards, a quarterly review for emerging issues, and a process for immediate review of emergent matters. An example of an emergent matter could be new environmental standards imposed by federal or provincial agencies. A sample protocol for adopting Development Standards is contained in Appendix F.
7. Using the new ePlan process for conforming Tentative Plans as a model, the CPAG Manager supported by UDI should work jointly on the conversion of all applications from paper format to digital format, to ensure cost-effective submissions leading to effective and timely processing.
8. The CPAG Manager with the support of the UDI should evaluate the success of ePlan processes for Tentative Plan applications in the fourth quarter 2007 and use this as a platform for further refinement of Outline Plan application process improvements.
9. The Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI should ensure the process for resolving disagreements is clearly understood and followed by all parties. The method for resolving disputes between civic departments needs to be affirmed by CPAG and communicated to UDI and other interested stakeholders. The existing CPAG Decision Model with appropriate modifications could serve as the template for dispute resolution between the parties. This should recognize that an appeal mechanism against a final administrative decision on Outline and Tentative plans should exist to give external stakeholders adequate opportunity to present an alternate position to an administrative refusal or conditional support. Incorporation of an ombudsman function into the process should be examined so stakeholders know that any appeal will be handled in a fair and unbiased manner and that a decision of the appellant body will be final with no subsequent appeals being entertained prior to a recommendation being submitted to the Calgary Planning Commission.
10. The UDI should consider an expanded role in disseminating information on Outline and Tentative Plan matters by acting as the primary contact with CPAG for other participants in the development industry. This acknowledges that UDI



represents approximately ninety percent of the development industry in Calgary and is conversant on all development related issues.

11. To facilitate timely processing of Outline Plan applications, the CPAG Manager with the support of the UDI Board should confirm that incomplete applications will not be accepted for processing. A complete application is defined as meeting all of the information requirements as agreed to by the parties on January 18, 2007 (see recommendation 5 above). Performance targets for processing complete Outline Plan applications should be reexamined in light of reduced information requirements as agreed to by the parties.
12. Recognizing the potential value in the pre-application process, particularly for developers who are not familiar with current City information and approval processes or for applications that may contain innovative or nonstandard items, all CPAG departments should as part of their commitment to the CPAG partnership schedule pre-application meetings within one week of receiving a request and will hold the pre-application meeting within two weeks.
13. The UDI and Director of Development and Building Approvals should seek opportunities to jointly inform the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) of the overall progress made in the processing of Outline Plan applications and identify how CPC may contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of future Outline Plan approval processes.
14. Given that external stakeholders have expressed concern that approval processes may not adequately address their concerns and comments and while consulting with external stakeholders is generally a good practice, the exact purpose of input from and role of external stakeholders in the OP/TP application processes needs to be clarified. Consequently, the CPAG Manager should review and confirm with the external stakeholders how their comments and input impacts the final decision making process.
15. Recognizing that there are current bottlenecks in the development application process, the Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI should investigate opportunities for UDI to assist with activities such as transportation system modeling using approved City transportation standards and with appropriate confirmation and approval by City transportation officials. This must acknowledge the proprietary nature and licensing restrictions of the Transportation Model software presently used by the City.



C. Performance Targets for City and Industry

16. Both parties should accept the principle that if standards are met and application requirements fulfilled, the application must be processed for approval in an expeditious manner and that an appropriate performance target will be adhered to. The City has committed to reviewing Outline Plan applications within 42 days of receiving a complete application 75% of the time.
17. Both parties should acknowledge the need to have realistic time spans for Outline and Tentative Plan processing being cognizant of issues such as the limitation of resources, construction schedules, and other windows of opportunity that impact the development industry. The time spans should consider three types of applications; full compliance, minor innovation and major innovation. The targets for Outline Plan applications will need to be renegotiated between the parties given the reduction in information requirements for Outline Plans as agreed to at the January 18th Focus group session and which the CPAG Manager agreed to develop.

D. Accommodating Innovation

18. Innovation in development should be recognized as the act or process of inventing or introducing something new which does not likely comply with existing City development standards. Any development proposal that is clearly innovative be it from the development community or the civic administration, should be given early attention, recognized as non-standard and judged on its individual merit. It must also be understood that conventional timelines may not apply because innovative applications by definition will require special attention and possibly longer timelines for review and approval. Recognizing this reality, the development community should initiate conversation and discussion with the affected civic departments well prior to submitting an Outline Plan application to identify the positive elements of the proposed innovation, potential municipal risks and possible mitigative measures.



E. Monitoring Program

19. The City and UDI should on an annual basis, conduct a review of the application requirements and approval processes with a view to improving the entire development application approval process. This review, while dealing with the entire process, should focus on a particular aspect that is seen by both parties as an opportunity for the most improvement. This function could be undertaken by the proposed Calgary Development Standards Committee, (see Appendix F).
20. The City should undertake periodic customer satisfaction surveys to test how the application processes are progressing and to identify “pinch” points that may require resolution from time to time. The City should review the results of the survey with UDI for the development of recommendations for improvement of service.
21. The Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI should immediately establish a dialogue with the Land Use Planning and Policy group (LUPP) to support the work that LUPP is undertaking to provide greater clarity for higher level City planning policies. The goal of this interaction should be to assist LUPP in developing policies for Council approval that establish clear and consistent direction for the preparation and approval of Outline and Tentative Plans.

Implementation

It is recommended that a concerted effort be made to implement all of these recommendations by the second quarter of 2008. Given the current challenges that the City of Calgary Planning department and the UDI are experiencing in a “super-heated” construction and development environment, the implementation of these recommendations will need to respect the staffing and resource challenges both organizations are experiencing. Nevertheless, CPAG and the UDI must continue to work together to achieve a balanced application process that jointly meets the needs of the municipality and the development community.



Introduction

In September 2006, the City of Calgary, Development and Building Approvals Business Unit in partnership with the Urban Development Institute - Calgary (UDI), identified the need to undertake a work program that would result in an improvement to the outline plan and tentative plan approval processes. Through its own review, the City of Calgary had determined process enhancements were required for outline plan (including land use) and tentative plan applications, which would benefit both applicants and the City. As well, UDI had concluded that improvement to how the applicants engage in the process was also required. The project therefore required a consultant to facilitate a common understanding of the development process between UDI and the City of Calgary and to aid in advancing the key recommendations.

Project Terms of Reference

Main Tasks

A. **Vision and Goals of the Outline Plan (including land use) and Tentative Plan**

The vision and goals of the Outline Plan Land Use and Tentative Plan processes require improved communication to stakeholders and in fact may not be well accepted. It is imperative therefore, to obtain a common vision which includes definition of complete applications achievable timelines and quality expectations. Limited communication has created a situation where application issues are not resolved in a manner which meets the needs of the City and Industry. This project will require the consultant to undertake a facilitated review by the City and UDI of the above noted processes in order to achieve a common understanding of those visions and goals.

B. **Clearly Define Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures of all Stakeholders**

There are a multitude of stakeholders, each with a vested interest in the outcome of outline plan and tentative plan applications. The list of stakeholders includes, but is not limited to, the City of Calgary, Architects, Planning and Engineering



Consultants, Developers, and Builders. Each role is unique and should add value to the process. In order to ensure an effective, efficient and predictable process, the roles, responsibilities and procedures expected of each stakeholder must be clearly defined, communicated and enacted.

C. Facilitate Agreement on Performance Targets for Both the City and Industry

The City and UDI have agreed to specific targets for portions of processing times as they relate to outline plan and tentative plan applications. Current metrics are used to evaluate the City's performance in reaching these targets. It is important to recognize that both the City and Industry's performance can impact the ability to reach these targets. This shared responsibility should be reflected in an agreement on shared performance targets.

D. Accommodating Innovation

The City currently has a number of standards that are uniformly applied to development. These standards may not take into account new and alternative ways of building sustainable communities. Existing processes may not be able to facilitate these types of projects in a manner that benefits both the City and Industry. Utilizing the available information, consideration should be given to how adjustments to the current decision model could better accommodate innovative projects.

Project Expectations

A. Vision and Goals of the Outline Plan, Land Use and Tentative Plan Processes

- Utilizing available studies facilitate a review between the City and UDI on improving application processes.
- Achieve a common understanding of the goals and functions of each stage of each applications process.
- Develop communication strategies that ensure the agreed upon vision and goal(s) are communicated among the City departments and industry.



- Vision and goals of the various processes should also align with Council policies and approved planning documents.
- Vision and goals should enhance and promote the operation and functionality of the interdepartmental teams in the review of applications.
- Establish a clear definition of a complete application for each application process.
- Categorize common issues that impact application timelines.
- Identify areas where duplication of efforts exists within the City and the Industry processes.

B. Clearly Define Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures of all Stakeholders

- Identify all stakeholders and achieve agreement on their respective responsibilities.
- Identify and define any stakeholders not previously included in existing materials.
- Recommend areas of responsibility currently maintained by the City which could be assumed by Industry.
- Update and refine the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

C. Facilitate Agreement on Performance Targets for both the City and Industry

- Identify key targets within each applications process and the area(s) of responsibility involved in achieving these targets.
- Evaluate each target, giving consideration to required levels of resource and potential process improvements.
- Identify all existing methods/metrics used in measuring performance in the City process and in the Industry process.
- Facilitate agreement on how to refine the existing methods/metrics to allow for



accurate performance measurement of the key stages and milestones within each development process.

D. Accommodating Innovation

- Evaluate the ability of current processes to accommodate innovative ideas.
- Recommend adjustments to the current processes or alternative processes to accommodate innovation.
- Through interviews and background materials, establish a common and shared understanding of sustainable community.
- Consider and make recommendations on methods to reward innovation; all three levels of government should be considered.
- Recommend a structure that meets these objectives.

E. Monitoring Program

- Recommend a monitoring program to be implemented by the City and UDI to track the advancement of this report's recommendation.



Project Workplan

To complete the project, the consultants proposed the following workplan which was accepted by the Steering Committee. The work was divided into four phases which led to the compilation of this report.

Phase	Work Effort	Deliverables
One	Project Start up and Current Situation Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Charter – project protocol. ➤ Identification of internal and external stakeholder and focus group participants. ➤ Review of all pertinent background documentation/studies/information. ➤ Environmental Scan and SWOT analysis of existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with current application and approval processes. ➤ Identification of existing Council policies impacted by current processes. ➤ Leading practice review of four to five other municipal organizations.
Two	Stakeholder Consultation and Focus Group Sessions (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Interview questionnaire for stakeholder consultation/interviews and focus group sessions. ➤ 20 to 30 one-on-one interviews. ➤ Three facilitated focus group sessions: one for City employees, a second for UDI members and a third for a combined group of City and UDI members to test initial findings. ➤ GAP analysis of existing processes. ➤ Summary report of findings from interviews and focus group sessions documenting stakeholder opinions and impressions of current processes.



Phase	Work Effort	Deliverables
Three	Process Mapping/Redesign and Action Plan Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mapping of existing application and approval processes to document tasks and process ownership. ➤ Identification of bottlenecks and non value added steps. ➤ Identification of responsibilities and ownership of processes at both the application and approval stages. ➤ Optimization of process ownership. ➤ Clarification of participant expectations and responsibilities. ➤ Consideration of innovative practices on possible process improvements. ➤ Improved communication processes. ➤ Performance metrics and evaluation methodology.
Four	Reporting/Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Draft report for steering committee review containing recommendations for process improvement and required support mechanisms. ➤ Final report with recommendations and implementation and communication processes.

Current Process Overview

In Calgary, Outline Plans (OPs) are the initial stage in a major subdivision application and are usually processed at the same time as the land use amendment application. OPs describe the proposed zoning, road layout, park locations and sizes, natural areas, surrounding context, conceptual servicing, etc.

Land owners or their consultants are encouraged to attend a pre-application meeting before submitting an OP application. The purpose of this process is for potential applicants to identify any major innovations or other potentially sensitive issues concerning the proposed development. The applicant should receive advice and feedback prior to submitting a formal planning application.

When an application is ready, owners or consultants submit OPs to the Corporate Planning Applications Group (CPAG) Business Office. Four generalists at CPAG



review the application if it is a simple file. If it is a more complex file, the OP application is circulated to specialists in various City of Calgary departments for review and comment.

External stakeholders such as school boards, utility companies and community groups also have opportunity to provide comments to the assigned CPAG file manager at this stage.

The CPAG generalists and department specialists consider such issues as: site access for emergency vehicles, street layout, building orientation, the location of open spaces (including linear pathways, sports fields and school sites), access to important community nodes, preservation of highly significant natural areas, efficient servicing, landscaping, proximity to commercial areas, capacity of feeder roads, transit-oriented development principles, smart growth principles, units per acre, innovative design, etc.

CPAG uses the comments to produce a written Detailed Team Review (DTR), which is forwarded to the owner or consultant. The target for the period from when the OP application is received to when the DTR is sent to the owner is 42 days.

If the DTRs require plans to be amended, the owner or consultant makes the required changes. In Q3 of 2006, 60% of DTRs required amended plans from owners or consultants. For those applications that required amendment, owners/consultants submitted an average of 2.1 additional amended sets of plans, each of which required further review and comments from City staff.

Once the assigned CPAG file manager is satisfied the OP application passes minimum standards, the CPAG file manager presents the OP and appropriate background comments and recommendations to the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) for decision. The CPAG recommendation is based on a simple pass/fail. Under current CPC processes the land owner/consultant does not make a presentation at the hearing. The target for processing an OP from submission to placement on a CPC agenda is 180 days. In practice, the overall average has been much higher at 280 days.

Once an OP is approved by the CPC, the owner or consultant may submit a Tentative Plan (TP) to CPAG for review and approval. The TP is a legal plan of the



subdivision based on the OPI, but substantially more detailed. The target for the TP application to decision period is 60 days. In Q3 of 2006 the actual average was 91 days.

The Role of the City of Calgary in Application Processes

The (CPAG) Business Office oversees business processes related to the review of planning applications for the City of Calgary. The primary objective of the CPAG process is to support a corporate perspective on development that reflects City and industry interests. The CPAG Business Office achieves this objective through the following:

1. The timely circulation of planning applications throughout City of Calgary departments. The purpose of the circulation process is to assess the applications for risk and conformity with standards.
2. The coordination of training across CPAG teams.
3. The facilitation of performance development and enhancement initiatives for CPAG staff.
4. The establishment of continuous improvement initiatives related to business processes and tools.
5. Working with staff and industry to resolve issues and conflicts related to CPAG files.
6. The monitoring of overall CPAG performance.

The Role of the Urban Development Institute in Application Processes

The Urban Development Institute's (UDI) activities focus on promoting wise, efficient and productive urban growth through the following:

1. The establishment of urban planning and development to best provide for the needs of Calgarians today and in the future.
2. The monitoring of legislation, government activities and program financing so needs are met in an efficient and cost-effective manner.



3. The development of a uniform and equitable legislative framework, within which the industry is able to meet the needs of the public in a timely and cost efficient manner.
4. The fostering of responsible dialogue between the industry, governments and the general public, in order to create increased awareness of the diverse implications of urban growth and the need for realistic solutions to our community's requirements while maintaining an optimum balance of low public cost and high environmental concern.
5. The upgrading of industry expertise through shared experience, increased education and an exchange of information.

SWOT Analysis

From the background information, interviews and focus group sessions, the consultants developed an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the current Outline Plan application and approval processes.

The SWOT identified the following general considerations regarding the existing situation: The expanded SWOT analysis is depicted in Appendix A.

Strengths

- The CPAG process is generally sound.
- The specialist departments are improving in explaining their positions on development matters.

Weaknesses

- Past relationships and history have been lost with departure of staff.
- Too much detail is asked for at the Outline Plan pre application stage.
- The current process does not encourage innovation.



Opportunities

- Stakeholders generally and specifically recognize the weaknesses and problems associated with current development application and approval processes and have acknowledged the need for change. Recognition of the need for change will lead to the identification and implementation of specific adjustments to the process that will hopefully address stakeholder needs.
- The POSSE system could be better used as a management decision tracking tool to aid the decision process. A move to electronic application filing could create new efficiencies.

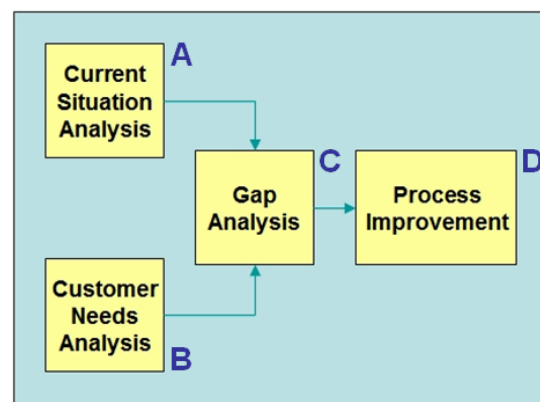
Threats

- Without additional experienced resources the CPAG team will be unable to keep pace with development in the community.
- Failure to achieve meaningful and measurable improvement to the development approval process will negatively impact the working relationship between the City and development community.

Gap Analysis

To understand the current Outline Plan process and to identify opportunities for process improvement, the consultants completed a Gap Analysis.

A Gap analysis is typically based on two investigations, first the current situation analysis, identifying as many as possible current measurable and non-measurable indicators, and second the customer needs analysis to identify customer needs. In this situation the customer definition is two-fold, both the UDI and the City cannot function without each other, and thus are each others customer. Finally, the two analyses are combined to determine the difference between the



current situation and the (new) desired situation, thus forming the gap between the two. The determined gap is then used to identify opportunity for process improvement.

The complete list of possible improvements is then used to identify three types of recommendations:

1. **Quick hits (QH)**, which are defined as follow-up projects or actions that will improve the process **significantly, without** having to spend a lot of time or resources to achieve the result.
2. **Priority 1 projects (P1)** that are also defined as follow-up projects or actions that will improve the process **significantly**, however these types of projects usually take **a lot more time and effort** to achieve the required results.
3. **Priority 2 projects (P2)**, projects defined as having less impact to improve the current process, however they still contribute to a more efficient and/or effective process.

Current Situation Analysis

Individual interviews as well as three focus group sessions were conducted to identify the current situation. Although the initial perception was the Outline Plan, as well as the Tentative Plan Process needed a full review, it became clear the current situation and the customer needs for the Tentative Plans are reasonably aligned, so the decision was made to focus on the Outline Plan only. The Tentative Plan application process had been recently modified to an electronic process and time will be required to work with the new process. Both the City and the UDI concurred with that approach, with the note that a review of the Pre-Application process needed to be studied as well. The Pre-Application process is the step preceding the submission of the Outline Plan and which was introduced by the City to streamline the Outline approval process, by providing preliminary comments to applicants on potential “show stopper” issues.

One of the outcomes of the current situation analysis is a visual representation of the current process in the form of a flowchart (Appendix B).



Measurable Indicators of the Current Process

Time

1. OP: Step 1: (Start to ITR) - Median = 25 days
2. OP: Step 2: (Application Review) - Median = 43 days (73% within target - Q3)
3. OP: Step 3: (Issue Resolution) - Median = 54 days
4. OP: Step 4: (CPC) - Median = 50 days
5. OP: Step 2~4 - Median = 245 days (63% within target - Q4)

These time periods are based on historical data that has changed due to a different approach, first started in November 2006. Not enough data is available over the more recent periods, however performance has improved. One observation is the measured time between Step 2 and 4 does not seem to be aligned with the overall timeline of 245 days. This is partly caused by the difference in measured time (= City time) and total time (= City time + Applicant time). The difference is not always accounted for.

Another observation is 75% of the total time for approval occurs after the DTR has been submitted (Step 3, Appendix B).

Customer Needs Analysis

Measurable Indicators (Targets)

Time

1. OP: Step 1: (Start to ITR) - Max = 21 days
2. OP: Step 2: (Application Review) - Max = 42 days
3. OP: Step 3: (Issue Resolution) - Max = 42 days
4. OP: Step 4: (CPC) - Max = 21 days
5. OP: Step 2~4 - Max = 105 days (= sum of 2-4)

Above time periods are a guideline for Outline Plan approvals. Rather than being on fixed timelines, the UDI wishes to:

- Agree upon a completion date for approval on a case-by-case situation (maybe a 'Fast Lane' option would be a solution); and
- Set sub-targets for individual steps in the approval process.



Non-Measurable Indicators

Pre-Application Process (Effectiveness)

The UDI identified the process as not well understood, lengthy and not contributing to effective decision making:

UDI members stated that while the process may have value to the City, the development industry was not experiencing significant value and in fact, it has elongated the process. UDI did concede that developers with less experience with City planning processes may draw benefit from this type of review. Most UDI members were familiar enough with City requirements to bypass the pre-application phase and gain time at the Outline Plan application stage.

Identified Gap

Measurable Indicators

Time

1. OP: Step 1 (Start to ITR): Small Gap, does not need full attention, however some quick hits can be identified (see D. Action Items and Opportunities).
2. OP: Step 2 (Application Review): Small Gap, process had been recently improved; changes need time to take place. Correct measuring and monitoring of the process should be sufficient to provide both parties with a clear understanding of the targets.

Another observation is with only six to eight hours contact time during the 21-day period of CPAG specialist review of the application, a target of seven days process time seems feasible.

3. OP: Step 3 (Issue Resolution): The gap is approximately 10 days; however 73% of the recently approved processes have met the target. Investigation of the reasons for not being able to meet the target for the remaining 27% should lead to opportunities for improvement. CPAG staffing has been noted as one of the most significant shortcomings in this area.



As stated in the current situation, there is a difference between the measured time and the actual time (for the entire process). Adding up the total process times, a result of 0.75 to one year total process time is today's situation. The big actual gap is the result of multiple factors, ranging from insufficient resources, and inefficiencies in the process and unnecessary delays, however the biggest factor contributing to the longer process time is the percentage of plans that need amendments and the number of cycles involved in going through the process.

4. OP: Step 4 (CPC): The gap between the current situation and the customer needs for Step 4 of the Outline Plan approval process is largely caused by the CPC meeting schedule.
5. OP: Step 2~4: The gap between the current situation and the customer needs is mostly caused by unaccounted time that exists when applications are on hold while additional information is being produced by the applicant.

Action Items, Opportunities and Observations:

OP: Step 2

Identify and agree upon SMART targets.

The acronym SMART has a number of slightly different variations, which can be used to provide a more comprehensive definition for goal setting; they can be varied to fit the right focus on the targets:

- S** - Specific, significant, stretching
- M** - Measurable, meaningful, motivational
- A** - Agreed upon, attainable, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented, accountable
- R** - Realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented
- T** - Time-based, timely, tangible, trackable

More detail could then be added by elaborating on the chosen definitions:

Specific: Well defined; and clear to anyone that has a basic knowledge of the project.

Measurable: Know if the goal is obtainable and how far away completion is; and know when it has been achieved.



Agreed Upon: All parties understand the process

Realistic: Within the availability of resources, knowledge and time.

Time-Based: Enough time to achieve the goal but not too much time, which can affect project performance.

Non-Measurable Indicators

Pre-Application Process (Effectiveness)

The present Pre-Application meeting is not mandatory. Experienced applicants have noted that they could choose to skip this process and go straight to submitting an Outline Plan. Optimizing communication between the City, UDI and its members at this stage can still add value to the Outline Plan approval process by allowing the City to use the high level overview for their resource planning and to facilitate good communication between the City and its stakeholders. This may also be the appropriate time for innovative concepts and proposals to be considered and discussed. Extended timelines for consideration of non-standard development proposals will be required to allow CPAG teams to assess the impact of innovative or non-standard concepts.

Interjurisdictional Scan

A review of four major Alberta municipalities was conducted to determine if there were practices which could significantly improve the CPAG method without seriously disrupting the present processes and requirements. Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge and Edmonton planning staff were surveyed and were very open about the processes and experience with the development industry in their communities. These four cities were selected as all operate under the Municipal Government Act and all are experiencing rapid growth. In all instances, the planning department is the owner of the process.

The four municipalities recognized the processing of land development applications is a balance between the industry and the municipality. The goal of both parties can be best described as achieving a timely and thorough review that results in an attractive development that will be economical to build and to maintain.



The application process in each of the municipalities is different from each other, reflecting the needs of the municipality at each stage. The roles of the Subdivision Authority and of the Municipal Planning Commission (where it exists), have evolved over time. The use of technology in allowing and requiring the electronic submission of applications is available in Calgary and Edmonton, and is considered to be useful as applications and supporting documents can be reviewed without the need to transfer sets of plans from one place to another.

Development standards for construction of facilities, such as roads, sewers, and parks, for eventual ownership by the municipality are generally similar. Generally accepted engineering standards are in place in all municipalities and are well understood by both consultants and civic staff. Minor modifications that are proposed to the standards are reviewed during the application process and are seen as part of the business.

Innovative development proposals that deviate from accepted standards which are not minor in nature are generally treated as an individual change to the municipal standards. These applications are reviewed by civic staff to determine the impact of the innovation. In all of the surveyed municipalities, this has the effect of slowing the process to gauge the potential risk and impact to the municipality. All of the municipalities are by definition some what risk adverse and innovation is a concept that all are attempting to deal with in their development approval processes. In many cases, the innovative measure will be discussed informally with the civic department that would be most affected prior to formal submission of the application.

All of the surveyed municipalities seek stakeholder input during the processing of applications. Open houses, mail to adjoining owners and notification of groups on a pre-set list (school boards, utilities, etc.) are examples seeking input. In all cases the input is sought early, thereby allowing the developer and municipal staff to incorporate positive changes.

Each of the four municipalities has some type of internal forum for employees from various civic departments to discuss outline/tentative plans. All of the surveyed cities also have a lead person whose role is to manage the file, coordinate interactions and mediate relations between the developer/consultant and civic departments, using his/her judgment to “quarterback” the entire process.



Most municipalities encourage developers/consultants to meet with staff prior to submitting a formal application. This informal approach allows both parties to address the issues that are critical to the particular application, such as construction timing, change to a standard, potential levies or new development charges, and respective workloads. Very few outline plan applications are submitted without meetings and conversations between both parties.

Recommendations

Following a review of background information, a series of 34 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in CPAG work groups, UDI members and consultants, one elected member of the Calgary Planning Commission, several external stakeholders, and three focus group sessions with City and UDI stakeholders, 21 recommendations were identified for process improvements. The recommendations are listed under the headings identified in the Project Terms of Reference.

A. Vision and Goals of Outline and Tentative Plan Processes

1. That the City and UDI through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should reaffirm that both parties are dedicated to producing quality urban development in Calgary. The goal of both parties can simply be described as achieving timely and thorough review that results in attractive development that is economical to build and to maintain.
2. That the UDI and CPAG Manager pursue a communication strategy that will continually inform practitioners, reviewing agencies, decision making bodies, media and the general public about the development process in Calgary. The existing CPAG Quarterly Newsletter could serve as one platform for this endeavor recognizing the multitude of stakeholders and their unique information requirements. Performance outcomes could be reported in a manner that allows a layperson to understand how the development approval process works and how performance is measured. This strategy would focus on specific target audiences, including City staff, elected officials, UDI members and consultants, other developers who are not members of UDI and the general public. The communication message should identify the facilitation and regulatory functions involved in the development process and should illustrate how current challenges are being jointly addressed by the City and development



industry. The message to stakeholders should acknowledge that coordination and cooperation between the parties produces better outcomes. To showcase improvements in the local development process for the public at large, the strategy could use mass media including local cable television; newspaper inserts, and direct mail to target audiences.

B. Defining Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

3. That all parties acknowledge the Director of Development and Building Approvals as the owner of the Outline and Tentative Plan application and approval processes. The UDI should designate a member of the Board to serve as a liaison with the Director of Development and Building Approvals on all matters pertaining to CPAG processes. These two individuals should be responsible for ensuring a dialogue between the City and development industry stakeholders on all matters relating to application and approval processes and establishment and amendment of standards for Outline and Tentative Plans.
4. It is understood that the development process is a continuum guided by a number of interrelated plans which move from the very general (high level) to the very specific. The highest level of planning direction comes from the Municipal Development /Regional Policy Plans, flowing through to Area Structure Plans, Outline Plans and finally to Tentative Plans/subdivision. The Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI must confirm the requirements for a complete Outline Plan application and then must do the same for the Tentative Plan process, and finally for engineering drawings. This will ensure that the proper information is submitted at the proper time and at the appropriate level of detail. Unless otherwise agreed to by both parties, the general level of information for an Outline Plan application should relate to general land use, major roadway system, open space, and basic utilities.
5. That changes to the information requirements for Outline Plan applications as identified in the joint focus group session held on January 18, 2007 as listed in Appendix D of this report be implemented. This will reduce the amount of time required to process an Outline Plan application while recognizing that detailed information that has previously been requested at the Outline Plan stage will be required at a latter point in the review and approval process. The parties must respect that while detailed construction information may not be required at the Outline Plan stage, it will be required at the engineering drawing stage.



6. The Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI should confirm a protocol to insure new standards proposed by either party are fully reviewed by both parties prior to adoption. The protocol should accommodate an annual review of all standards, a quarterly review for emerging issues, and a process for immediate review of emergent matters. An example of an emergent matter could be new environmental standards imposed by federal or provincial agencies. A sample protocol for adopting Development Standards is contained in Appendix F.
7. Using the new ePlan process for conforming Tentative Plans as a model, the CPAG Manager supported by UDI should work jointly on the conversion of all applications from paper format to digital format, to ensure cost-effective submissions leading to effective and timely processing.
8. The CPAG Manager with the support of the UDI should evaluate the success of ePlan processes for Tentative Plan applications in the fourth quarter 2007 and use this as a platform for further refinement of Outline Plan application process improvements.
9. The Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI should ensure the process for resolving disagreements is clearly understood and followed by all parties. The method for resolving disputes between civic departments needs to be affirmed by CPAG and communicated to UDI and other interested stakeholders. The existing CPAG Decision Model with appropriate modifications could serve as the template for dispute resolution between the parties. This should recognize that an appeal mechanism against a final administrative decision on Outline and Tentative plans should exist to give external stakeholders adequate opportunity to present an alternate position to an administrative refusal or conditional support. Incorporation of an ombudsman function into the process should be examined so stakeholders know that any appeal will be handled in a fair and unbiased manner and that a decision of the appellant body will be final with no subsequent appeals being entertained prior to a recommendation being submitted to the Calgary Planning Commission.
10. The UDI should consider an expanded role in disseminating information on Outline and Tentative Plan matters by acting as the primary contact with CPAG for other participants in the development industry. This acknowledges that UDI



represents approximately ninety percent of the development industry in Calgary and is conversant on all development related issues.

11. To facilitate timely processing of Outline Plan applications, the CPAG Manager with the support of the UDI Board should confirm that incomplete applications will not be accepted for processing. A complete application is defined as meeting all of the information requirements as agreed to by the parties on January 18, 2007 (see recommendation 5 above). Performance targets for processing complete Outline Plan applications should be reexamined in light of reduced information requirements as agreed to by the parties.
12. Recognizing the potential value in the pre-application process, particularly for developers who are not familiar with current City information and approval processes or for applications that may contain innovative or nonstandard items, all CPAG departments should as part of their commitment to the CPAG partnership schedule pre-application meetings within one week of receiving a request and will hold the pre-application meeting within 2 weeks.
13. The UDI and Director of Development and Building Approvals should seek opportunities to jointly inform the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) of the overall progress made in the processing of Outline Plan applications and identify how CPC may contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of future Outline Plan approval processes.
14. Given that external stakeholders have expressed concern that approval processes may not adequately address their concerns and comments and while consulting with external stakeholders is generally a good practice, the exact purpose of input from and role of external stakeholders in the OP/TP application processes needs to be clarified. Consequently, the CPAG Manager should review and confirm with the external stakeholders how their comments and input impacts the final decision making process.
15. Recognizing that there are current bottlenecks in the development application process, the Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI should investigate opportunities for UDI to assist with activities such as transportation system modeling using approved City transportation standards and with appropriate confirmation and approval by City transportation officials. This must acknowledge the proprietary nature and licensing restrictions of the Transportation Model software presently used by the City.



C. Performance Targets for City and Industry

16. Both parties should accept the principle that if standards are met and application requirements fulfilled, the application must be processed for approval in an expeditious manner and that an appropriate performance target will be adhered to. The City has committed to reviewing Outline Plan applications within 42 days of receiving a complete application 75% of the time.
17. Both parties should acknowledge the need to have realistic time spans for Outline and Tentative Plan processing being cognizant of issues such as the limitation of resources, construction schedules, and other windows of opportunity that impact the development industry. The time spans should consider three types of applications; full compliance, minor innovation and major innovation. The targets for Outline Plan applications will need to be renegotiated between the parties given the reduction in information requirements for Outline Plans as agreed to at the January 18th Focus group session and which the CPAG Manager agreed to develop.

D. Accommodating Innovation

18. Innovation in development should be recognized as the act or process of inventing or introducing something new which does not likely comply with existing City development standards. Any development proposal that is clearly innovative be it from the development community or the civic administration, should be given early attention, recognized as non-standard and judged on its individual merit. It must also be understood that conventional timelines may not apply because innovative applications by definition will require special attention and possibly longer timelines for review and approval. Recognizing this reality, the development community should initiate conversation and discussion with the affected civic departments well prior to submitting an Outline Plan application to identify the positive elements of the proposed innovation, potential municipal risks and possible mitigative measures.



E. Monitoring Program

19. The City and UDI should on an annual basis, conduct a review of the application requirements and approval processes with a view to improving the entire development application approval process. This review, while dealing with the entire process, should focus on a particular aspect that is seen by both parties as an opportunity for the most improvement. This function could be undertaken by the proposed Calgary Development Standards Committee, (see Appendix F).
20. The City should undertake periodic customer satisfaction surveys to test how the application processes are progressing and to identify “pinch” points that may require resolution from time to time. The City should review the results of the survey with UDI for the development of recommendations for improvement of service.
21. The Director of Development and Building Approvals and UDI should immediately establish a dialogue with the Land Use Planning and Policy group (LUPP) to support the work that LUPP is undertaking to provide greater clarity for higher level City planning policies. The goal of this interaction should be to assist LUPP in developing policies for Council approval that establish clear and consistent direction for the preparation and approval of Outline and Tentative Plans.

Implementation

It is recommended a concerted effort be made to implement all of these recommendations by the second quarter of 2008. Given the current challenges that the City of Calgary Planning department and the UDI are experiencing in a “super-heated” construction and development environment, the implementation of these recommendations will need to respect the staffing and resource challenges both organizations are experiencing. Nevertheless, CPAG and the UDI must continue to work together to achieve a balanced application process that jointly meets the needs of the municipality and the development community.



APPENDIX A

SWOT ANALYSIS



SWOT Analysis

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the CPAG process were identified by internal and external stakeholders and captured below:

Strengths

- The CPAG process is generally sound and can serve as a solid base and forum for effective development application decision making. Additional staff resources and process modifications are required to make it an excellent process that meets stakeholder needs.
- Specialist departments are improving at explaining the position of the City and are in the process of building a better relationship with industry notwithstanding current challenges.
- UDI is seen as a credible, third party that supports the development application process in Calgary and can advocate for other segments of the development industry.

Weaknesses

- Limited communication has created a situation where application issues are not resolved in a manner that meets either City or industry needs.
- Relationships and development history have been lost. City staff and consultants/developers may not fully understand or comprehend each others needs and capabilities.
- The original objective of the pre-application process is not being achieved. The pre-application process takes a significant amount of time and is not adding value according to participants.
- Some city departments believe their comments are not necessarily included in the detailed team review (DTR) comments that are forwarded to the developer.
- There is a lack of clarity concerning minimum standards and when discretion may be exercised in the enforcement of minimum standards.
- Departmental objectives and interpretation of policies frequently do not align.



- Present system does not encourage innovation and frequently results in mediocre results.
- The dispute resolution process is not well understood by participants.
- Some UDI members feel City employees should provide more detail and reasons when:
 - Rejecting an OP application on policy or statutory grounds; and
 - Asking for additional reports and details.
- There is disagreement about the effectiveness and accuracy of the City's system of measuring the timeliness of the process.
- City processes discourage innovation because staff may be risk-averse and innovation is often viewed as meaning lower standards or less cost to the developer.
- Developers feel inexperienced file managers are presenting applications at CPC.

Opportunities

- Stakeholders generally and specifically recognize the weaknesses and problems associated with current development application and approval processes and have acknowledged the need for change. Recognition of the need for change will lead to the identification and implementation of specific adjustments to the process that will hopefully address stakeholder needs.
- The POSSE system could be better used as a management decision making tool to aid the decision process. A move to electronic application filing could create new efficiencies.

Threats

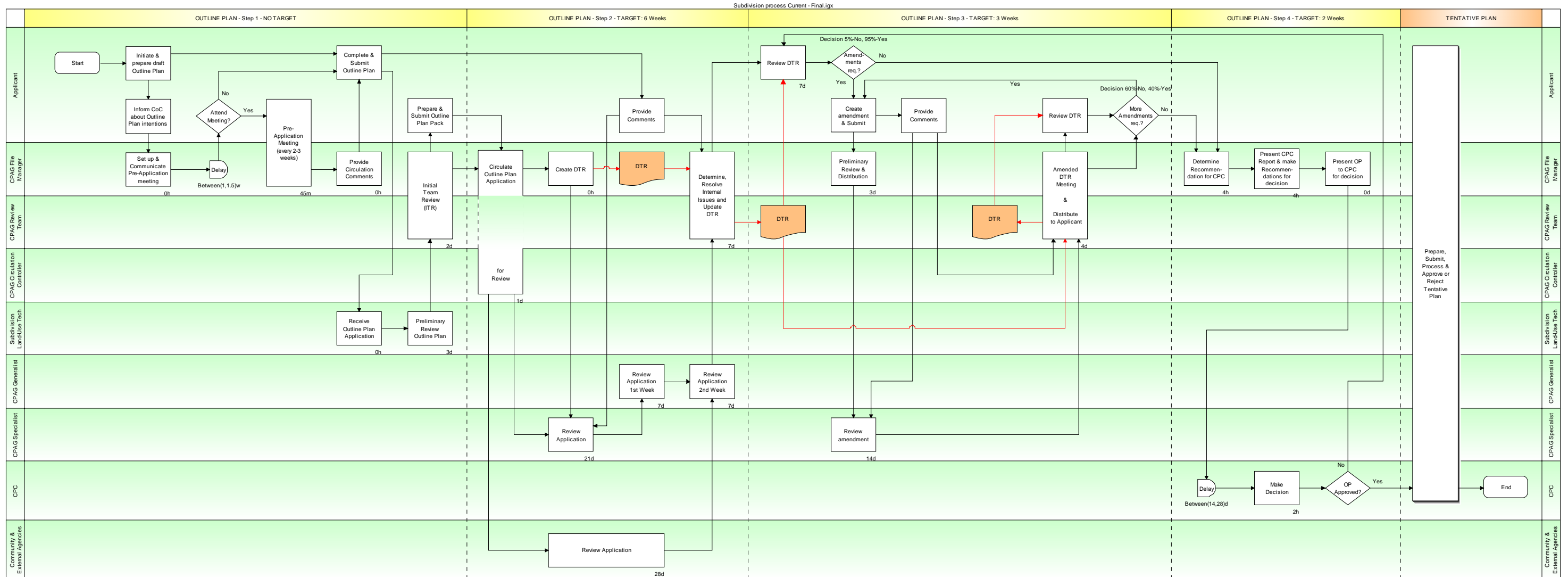
- Without additional resources the CPAG team will be unable to keep pace with development in the community.
- Failure to achieve meaningful and measurable improvement to the development approval process will negatively impact the working relationship between the City and development community.



APPENDIX B

**OUTLINE PLAN – CURRENT SITUATION
PROCESS MAP**



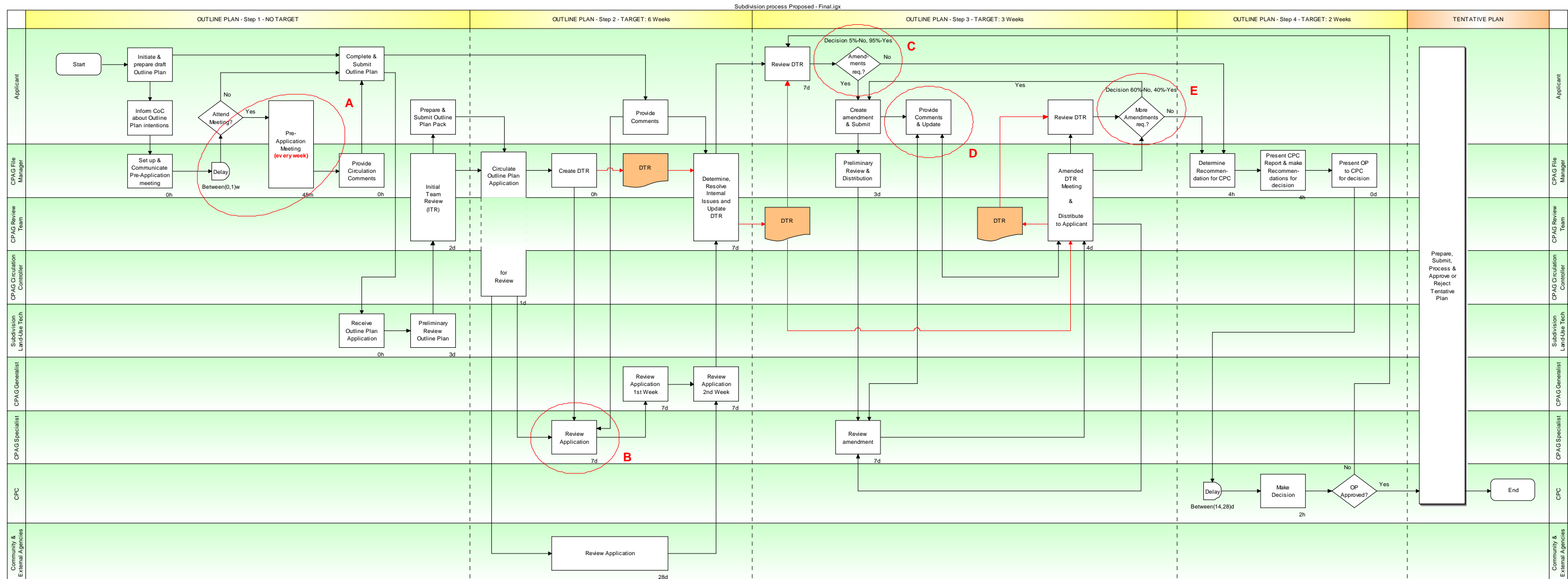


Note: Number of ownership changes (when a process-flow line crosses a department boundary) equals 26.

APPENDIX C

**OUTLINE PLAN – PROPOSED SITUATION
PROCESS MAP**





- A =** Pre-Application meeting scheduled within one week of receipt of request and held within two weeks. Alternative would be to schedule meetings every week and cancel if no items on the agenda.
- B =** Although the available timeframe for CPAG is set at 21 days, the actual time spent by CPAG during those 21 days averages six to eight hours (per specialist, however they work parallel of each other). A seven day target seems feasible for staff review notwithstanding a 28 day period is open for comment from community and external agencies.
- C =** The percentage of Outline Plans that do not need amendments is very low, only 5%. Although a new percentage (based on improvements in Step (2) is hard to estimate, the focus should be on increasing this number.
- D =** A direct update of the applicant's amendment during the review phase will prevent unnecessary delays by not prematurely having the DTR meeting at which time the additional amendments are needed anyway (= the loop goes back to the beginning of Step 3).
- E =** The above mentioned approach will then lead to an increase in amendments that do not need additional change.

Note: To reduce the number of ownership changes a restructuring of the 'approval involved' departments needs to take place.

APPENDIX D

**SUMMARY OF JANUARY 18, 2007 JOINT
CITY/UDI FOCUS GROUP SESSION**



Urban Development Institute/City of Calgary

Outline Plan and Tentative Plan Approval Process Review

Focus Group Session
Thursday, January 18th, 2007
1:00 pm - 4:30 pm
City Managers Boardroom #1
City Hall, Calgary

Attendees:

UDI	City	WMC
Paul Taylor	Bill Findlay	Gordon Harris
Bela Syal	Judy Lupton	Bruce Duncan
Marcello Chiacchia	Stan Schwartzenger	Mark van der Meer
David Allen	Doug MacDonald	
Arnie Stefaniuk	Scott Mackie	
Brad Lindeburgh	Scott Lockwood/Joel Armitage	
Lisa Rasmussen	Cliff De Jong	

Purpose of Focus Group Session:

As the third of three information gathering sessions being facilitated by Western Management Consultants, the agenda for the joint UDI/City focus group session was designed to gather stakeholder comment and input into current Outline Plan application and approval processes. The goal of the session was for City and UDI stakeholders to jointly identify and discuss matters of mutual concern and to explore opportunities to enhance communication and improve processes.

Comments and suggestions gathered through this focus group session will be aggregated with the information and comments gathered through the two previous focus group sessions held previously with City and UDI stakeholders and individual stakeholder interviews conducted by the consultants. The results of the three focus group sessions, individual interviews, information gathering and process review will be synthesized to prepare the final report and recommendations.



Task #1:

Review and discuss the current Outline Plan information requirements. What information is truly required to process an Outline Plan application? Identify information that is not “mission critical” to the Outline approval process while recognizing that technical information is required at some point in the process.

Discussion Summary

The discussion started with an overview of pre-application process to understand how it supports the outline plan application process. The UDI noted that the pre-application process is not well understood, is lengthy, and is not contributing to effective decision making.

Scott Mackie acknowledged that pre-applications are not mandatory but noted that the value of the pre-application process to the City is two-fold:

1. First, it gets the City ‘up-to-speed’ with an application and identifies the sensitive issues and potential “show stoppers,” and
2. The high level overview helps the City with their resource planning.

UDI members stated that while the process may have value to the City, the development industry was not experiencing significant value and in fact, it has elongated the process. UDI did concede that developers with less experience with City planning processes may draw benefit from this type of review. Most UDI members were familiar enough with City requirements to bypass the pre-application phase and gain time at the Outline Plan application stage.

It was also noted by UDI, that information requirements seem to change from application to application which is confusing to applicants.

The discussion then focused on the information requirements of the current Outline Plan application form. Each of the information requirements identified on the application were reviewed with a view to either, **1)** confirm the information requirement, **2)** delete the information requirement or, **3)** move the information requirement to a latter stage of development approval such as at the Tentative Plan or engineering drawing stages.



The Application Requirement List - Outline Plans is attached for reference purposes as it was the focus of discussion in Task 1.

Sections 1 – 5:

The information requirements in the first five sections of the application form were acceptable to both the City and UDI and no change was identified or required.

Section 6:

The need for very detailed information such as the widths of walkways, sidewalks, standard corner radii, etc. at the Outline Plan stage was questioned by UDI. It was felt that this type of information could be better provided at the Tentative Plan or engineering drawings stage.

The City acknowledged that it is currently experiencing challenges in reviewing engineering drawings due to staff turnover and resource constraints but the issue is being addressed. UDI members were aware of the difficulty of obtaining and retaining staff given their own experience in the current market.

The UDI suggested that backsloping requirements to determine property requirements for future intersection/interchanges should not be a requirement at the Outline Plan stage.

Section 9:

Cross-sections, drawn to scale:

The information in this section should be moved to the Tentative Plan or engineering drawing stage.

Section 10:

Shadow Plan(s) for adjoining parcels and next phases of development:

The UDI questioned the need to show this type of information because it is arguably the responsibility of other developers/landowners. It was suggested that this issue could be better addressed at the ASP stage where a development area is depicted at a higher scale and the interconnection of roads, natural water courses, and the like can be displayed for the entire area.



Action:

The City agreed to develop terms of reference for pre-applications to better define and describe the process and a consistent manner in which pre-applications and timelines will be managed.

The City agreed to remove the detailed requirements of Section 6 from Outline Plan applications but acknowledged that the information will be required at a latter stage such as at the Tentative Plan or engineering drawing phase and further discussion will be required with UDI to identify the best opportunity for review of detailed information.

The City also agreed to clarify the issue of changing development standards throughout the application process to avoid changing standards and the resulting confusion. This will also include a review of the optional information requirements listed in the last part of Section 10.

Timing:

CPAG staff will complete this review including application information requirements by February 28 and meet with UDI thereafter to review the draft.

Task #2:

Identify opportunities to expedite and resolve disagreements and disputes at the Outline Plan application stage.

Discussion Summary

The UDI identified the need for a dispute mechanism to deal with situations when there is disagreement over Outline Plan information requirements and specifications. Two types of disagreements were identified. The first is between the developer and the City and the second is between civic departments.

Scott Mackie took time to explain how the City Decision Model has been recently modified to handle internal disputes between the cross functional team members. Since the model was revised, the number of internal disputes has declined.



The UDI advised they would like to know who to contact during the issue resolution phase. Unknown project contacts, as well as competing departments with different information criteria make it difficult for UDI members to complete this step. Scott advised that the Lead Planner should be the first point of contact when a disagreement arises. He noted that if the matter cannot be adequately resolved at that level, the City will permit the dispute to be elevated in accordance with the Decision Model. It was suggested that this approach be tried for a six-month period to gauge success.

Action:

The City will provide a copy of the Decision Model to the UDI for information and the UDI will send the Decision Model as a bulletin to its members to test for six months.

Task #3:

Identify and discuss performance targets for Outline and Tentative Plan application processes that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.

Discussion Summary

The UDI suggested a 'Quick Lane' idea as a solution to deal with standard Outline Plans. UDI asked if a standard Outline Plan without innovative concepts or significant deviations from current standards could be processed faster. The City indicated that the process would likely stay the same, whether the plan was simple or not. Scott Mackie shared Quarter 4 Outline Plan review results with the group which indicated that 73% of the DTR's issued in Q4 were completed on Target (DTR issued within 42 days) and that 5 of 8 Outline Plans on the CPC agenda in Q4 were well within the target range (within 180 days of the application date).

The City noted that up to 75% of the total time to approval occurs after the DTR has been issued. It was acknowledged that the resolution of conditions was a shared responsibility but that issue resolution timing was largely up to the applicant. It was suggested by UDI that sometimes they are spending significant amounts of energy resolving conditions of the DTR that are not the highest priority and that it would be



beneficial if some direction could be given by the File Manager on which conditions are critical and/or which will take a significant amount of time to resolve.

The UDI identified the need for more clarity in timelines for application processing and decision making. The UDI also suggested that targets should respect stakeholder requirements to expedite development and take advantage of “windows of opportunity” such as spring construction starts. The City suggested that if ‘sub-targets’ were identified by the applicant at an early stage that more could be done in providing opportunities to achieve the ‘sub-targets’. Both the City and UDI agreed that communication is essential for both parties to reach agreement on realistic timelines.

It was also noted by the City that when amended plans are required after the DTR has been issued that an average of 23 days is added onto the time required to decision. Efforts should be designed to reduce the number of amended plan iterations in order to see appreciable time savings.

The UDI indicated the need for better information concerning the status of an application and who is the primary contact for information. The City identified the File Manager as the primary contact and the person who manages the approval process and that both applicants and developers have access to VISTA to view the progression of the application.

Both parties agreed that more communication and understanding of each others timelines and benchmarks was needed so that processing of Outline plans is realistic and timely. This communication and understanding must exist at all levels including applicants and lead planners.

Task #4:

If given the chance, what one or two changes would you make to the present Outline and Tentative Plan application and approval processes to make the processes more efficient and effective for all stakeholders?



Discussion Summary

The City noted additional budget resources had been requested but significant change is not anticipated. Resource and training are at the top of their list to improve the quality and timeliness of decisions. The City also noted that innovative designs take more time to consider and process, thus impacting department resources.

The UDI recognized the City's need for more resources to produce timely decisions and deal with innovation.

A brief discussion took place concerning how the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) is impacting the decision making process.

Action:

It was suggested that the City and UDI work collaboratively to prepare a circular to be presented to CPC which outlines the challenges that UDI and the City are experiencing when applications are forwarded to CPC for decision.

Both parties agreed that this was a worthwhile endeavor and will arrange a future meeting to discuss how this can be undertaken. Stan Schwartzenberger will be the lead contact for the City and Lisa Rasmussen will be the lead contact for UDI.

The following items were identified as potential process improvements:

- Innovation needs to be encouraged but this will take additional time at the front end of the application process. A two tier process needs to be explored.
- If innovation is being proposed, initiate discussions with affected departments early in the process, perhaps even before the pre-application stage.
- SMART Growth principles need to be fully explored.
- Identify and require the right information at the right time (Outline Plan vs. Tentative Plan vs. engineering drawings).
- Timely communication is a key factor to improving decision making for Outline and Tentative Plans.



- Find a way to eliminate subjectivity. Objective criteria for decision making are critical to successful and timely decisions.

As a final comment before the focus group concluded, Scott Mackie advised that if invited he would personally attend any meeting to monitor the process.

The consultants thanked the stakeholders for attending and sharing their thoughts and providing input into the review process. The focus group session adjourned at 4:28 pm.



APPENDIX E

**OBSERVATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS AND
SEPARATE CITY/UDI FOCUS GROUP
SESSIONS**



Stakeholders' Observations of Current Outline and Tentative Plan Application and Approval Processes

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
<i>The Overall Process</i>		
<p>The relationship between the City and UDI during the overall process.</p>	<p>Recognize the relationship, communication, respect and understanding between the two parties need improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Miss the days when there was less turn over at the City and a more personal, trusting relationship could be nurtured with City officials. As one interviewee put it, "Team spirit between industry and the City is gone." Another interviewee said, "There seems to be an 'us vs. them' attitude." ➤ At the same time recognize sometimes developers/consultants walk in with the attitude they know better than the City employees. ➤ CPAG needs to communicate better with everyone involved in the process, not just UDI. Website is fine but not good enough.
<p>The effectiveness of POSSE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ POSSE works great as a tracking tool, but what is needed is a management tool that would make real-time sharing of information possible. ➤ POSSE does not take into account the differences between outline and tentative plans. One interviewee said, "The technical process has been a challenge specifically related to POSSE implementation for outline and tentative plans. I understand it is getting better but there may not have 	<p>No comments.</p>

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
	been enough thought concerning the difference between development applications and the needs for outline and tentative plans.”	
The consistency with which the overall process is applied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Should work in theory but does not because the process is either misapplied by specialists at the beginning or overridden by senior staff members and/or politicians at the end. ➤ Standards are constantly changing and are not communicated to everyone, nor is the reason for the change always clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Works too slowly overall, which increases risk for developers. ➤ Admit consultants/developers try to push the envelope sometimes, but generally try to follow the process. ➤ Standards are constantly changing and are not communicated to everyone; nor is the reason for the change always clear.
Clarity about the overall objectives of the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some interviewees say the corporate culture is a stumbling block. Many employees see the process as a control function instead of an enabling function. ➤ Other interviewees lamented the current corporate culture is to promote development at all other costs (e.g., developers' needs trump SMART growth, social considerations, environmental considerations, public health and safety considerations, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel the corporate culture at the City is a stumbling block. Feel employees see this as a “disapproval” process, rather than an “approval” process. Attitude of system seems to be one of control, not service. One interviewee said, “There seems to be an attitude of ‘find a problem’ when the attitude should be ‘solve a problem’.”
Role and capability of the file manager.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are unclear how to best manage the relationship between the developer and the City. Legally all plans should be forwarded (or returned) to the file managers in case of 	<p>Feel no one has authority. Interviewees commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “File managers are classified as ‘managers’, but do not exercise any authority.”

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
	<p>additional required information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, not all City employees agree everything should be funneled through the file manager (e.g., Fire Department interviewees noted they cannot resolve issues directly with the developer – everything has to go through the file manager and they sometimes feel their comments are lost). • Moreover, not all City employees currently follow the requirement to go through the file manager (e.g., an interviewee from another area said that in practice, 60% of the developers engineers contact the applicant directly). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Inappropriate comments to the particular stage are often given by departments, but the comments remain.” ➤ “CPAG staff needs a strong mentor so there is an ability to assess risk in the plan and to ask only for what is needed.”
<p>Capability of other City employees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognize that due to a lack of training, lack of sufficient process knowledge, high turnover and a high volume of applications, both the City and the UDI are struggling with available resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel there is not enough staff at the City. ➤ Feel City staff with inadequate experience (this includes some employees at the file manager level) have an inordinate amount of decision-making power. One interviewee said, “This is not a good time to be training new people when senior people are available.” • One example cited of difficulty caused by inexperienced staff was when eight files were not progressing because of limited staff, and staff who did not understand the

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
		<p>process. An experienced person was put in and the files were resolved in one week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CPAG meetings are another example of difficulty caused by inexperienced staff. CPAG has junior staff who come to meetings, but cannot make decisions. As a result, time is wasted.
Capability of developers/consultants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some interviewees noted there has been a marked decrease in the quality of applications coming in from developer consultants. A few remarks from interviewees included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Quality of information coming from some consultants leaves a lot to be desired and makes it very hard to process the applications." • "Quality of consultants varies and this impacts the quality of applications." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agree not all consultants/developers do applications of the same quality, and find it unfortunate that existing processes do not recognize the good applicants, who make up around 30% of applicants. Several interviewees suggested there should be an "express lane" approach for this group. As a few interviewees said, "Why does the system treat all applicants equally when there are such obvious differences?"
Perception about developers/consultants' understanding of City processes and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some interviewees felt applicants may not understand the department needs for approval processes. ➤ Others believe developers/consultants generally understand what the City needs. ➤ UDI is viewed positively - seen as an effective third party to clarify understandings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments.

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
Perception about City's understanding of developers/consultants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognize City staff does not always have a good understanding of developers'/consultants' needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Most feel City staff does not understand the perspective of developers/consultants.
<i>Pre-Application Process</i>		
The timeliness of the pre-application process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Timelines could improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ See pre-application as a delay because it takes up to three weeks to get a meeting.
The ownership of the pre-application process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The process is lead by CPAG but should be jointly owned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel only the file manager should review the pre-application and only at a high level.
The objectives/vision/goals of the pre-application process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some felt the focus should be on just "showstoppers." <p>Others felt the focus should be expanded to address any and all noticed deficiencies (e.g., one interviewee noted approximately 50-60% of all applications at the pre-application stage have some deficiency). Those who feel the focus of the pre-application process should be expanded see the pre-application process as a value-added service for the developers – if developers were to address issues identified in the pre-application process, then the application process once they hand in the OP would go faster. As one interviewee put it, "The objective of the pre-application process should streamline applications for the applicants".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel focus should be just on showstoppers. ➤ There are no fixed rules; too many moving targets. ➤ Perceive the pre-application process is now a formalized, mandatory step. Needs clarification. ➤ Why can't experienced developers go directly to the application stage?

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
<i>Outline Plan (OP) Process</i>		
The effectiveness of circulation of the OPs to specialists in various departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Most interviewees feel circulation is a good process because the experts in various areas have the opportunity to comment on OPs near the beginning of the process rather than the end when it is often too late. ➤ However, others feel circulation of applications has proven to be a problem. 	Feel the mandatory pre-circulation process doubles the time. One interviewee said, "Subdivision standards have not changed – why has there been a doubling of the time it takes to process applications?"
The morning post-circulation (Content Coordinator Group – CCG) meetings to discuss OP applications without developers present. ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CPAG members feel this process is working well. ➤ Specialists sometimes feel they should be included in more of these meetings. 	➤ No comments were made.
The City's timeliness during the OP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ While CPAG members and file managers generally feel the City is doing a timely job at this stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some interviewees feel the City could do its job faster. • Others feel some departments are taking more, or need more, time to provide input to the four-person CPAG team than others. • Some commented there is not enough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Would like the OP process to go faster. ➤ Deadlines are not consistently set and met by CPAG. ➤ City staff does not always promptly respond to e-mails and phone calls.

¹ Currently the File Manager and his/her four-person CPAG team (from Planning, Transportation, Urban Development and Parks) meet. Specialists from specific departments that report to each of these four groups can also be called to the table when needed.

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
	<p>time to thoroughly review plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel it would help if there was recognition that OP/TP applications are for developments of different sizes – it is not fair to either City reviewers or applicants of smaller developments when an applicant with a larger development is given the same short timeframe for turnaround. 	
The developers/consultants' timeliness during the OP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel frustrated that while the City is expected to do fast turnarounds, some developers/consultants take a relatively long time to respond to the City's comments. As one interviewee put it, "The industry expects they can take all the time they want, but the City should respond in a day or two." ➤ Interviewees also pointed out that while the process from receipt of the application by the City to receipt of DTR comments by the developer/consultant is relatively fast, the process really bogs down once negotiations begin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments were made.
The ownership of the OP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Both sides feel there are silos in the City, with each separate area trying to represent its own area (e.g., UDI wants higher density, while Fire/Roads want lower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel greater leadership should be shown by senior people. One interviewee said, "There does not appear to be any oversight from senior staff or senior management and the file

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
	<p>density).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some departments do not understand why the comments they make are not necessarily included in the detailed team review (DTR) comments that are forwarded to the developer. 	<p>managers are inexperienced.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Also, both sides felt there were silos in the City, with each separate area trying to fight for its own area.
<p>The objectives/vision/goals of the OP process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ On both sides people commented this is beginning to feel more like a “disapproval process” than an “approval process”. ➤ There is a lot of confusion about what should be done at each stage. In one City member’s words, “We used to give feedback during the tentative plan process, but then we were told by then it was too late. So then we started giving feedback at the pre-application process, but then we were told our feedback was coming in too early. So then we started giving feedback during the outline plan process, and still we were sometimes told our feedback was coming in too early or too late. So now we just try to give our feedback at every possible point in the process. It’s the same feedback we’re giving. Why can’t we just give it and let someone else figure out the right time to include it?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is a lot of confusion about what should be done at each stage. Continuity through the process is needed. For example, standard conditions are repeated at stages where they are not appropriate. One interviewee noted that the Roads Division is slow as they are making more work for themselves by asking for plans/details that are more appropriate at another level such as at the Engineering drawings stage. ➤ Also, the amount of detail asked for at the outline plan stage is excessive. Numerous examples were provided – spiral curves, total grading, double frontage, etc.

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
Accountability for the OP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Like the new system of measuring how long it takes for an application to be processed at this stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do not agree with the new system of measuring how long it takes for an application to be processed at this stage.
Developers' responsiveness to the City's DTR comments on OPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are frustrated developers/consultants send multiple revised plans, none of which address all of the City's DTR comments. As one interviewee put it, "We should not have 10-15 revisions being sent back and forth." Would prefer to receive one revised copy at a time that addresses all DTR comments. Another interviewee said, "This is where the time frame really bogs down. Some applicants address outstanding issues quickly, while others really dig in their heels. A lot of applicants are their own worst enemy." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments were made.
Resolution between the City and developers/consultants of DTR comments made by the City on the OPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The dispute resolution process is not working. ➤ Recognize there is a difference between DTR comments based on policy preferences (a "gray" area) and DTR comments based on minimum statutory standards (a "black and white" area). ➤ Some feel City members could provide more detail when rejecting an OP application on policy or statutory grounds. ➤ Some feel City members could be more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some do not agree with the City's interpretation of what is a subjective "gray" area and what is an objective "black and white" area. For example, one interviewee said the Fire Department's standard for the minimum road width required for fire trucks is greater than the road width actually required for fire trucks to maneuver. There is a lot of interpretation made that is questionable. For example, for one staff person "Pedestrian Friendly" means "No Front Garage". Feel if an

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
	<p>open to negotiating alternative ways development can meet Calgarians' minimum health, safety, environmental and sustainability standards while meeting their desire for innovative, higher-density, cost effective neighbourhood design. For example, instead of spacing homes farther apart to reduce the risk of a fire spreading to multiple units, sprinklers could be installed in each unit. Or to use another example, when the connecting road angle should be between 75° and 90°, there should be some flexibility to accept a plan with a 74° degree connection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some interviewees said part of the challenge is departments that have particularly challenging issues (e.g., Fire, Roads) do not get to talk with the developers directly, and so they cannot resolve their issues face to face. 	<p>outline plan meets the ASP policy and technical requirements appropriate for that level of plan, it should be approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Also, some feel some of the City's comments are at cross purposes. For example, one department will ask for higher density and support smaller lots and narrower streets, while another department will ask for lower density so fires do not spread as easily from one home to another. As one interviewee said, "At final CPAG meetings, there is often no <i>City</i> position, just comments." Another interviewee said, "CPAG is a consensus group/process, not a decision making process/group. The staff seems timid, and many are inexperienced. At CPAG meetings with applicants present, disagreements between departments occur because problems had not been worked out between civic departments." ➤ Some interviewees expressed frustration with the DTR comments and requests being made – for example, City employees ask for reports and details without giving a reason for those requests. ➤ One interviewee noted the Planning Department has no capital at risk, as do other departments, and as a result, may not understand the impact of comments and

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
		<p>requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comment is ever final – it is hard to conclude any plan with the possibility of changes to comments. Loophole Clause – “We may want more”.
Political involvement in resolution of DTR comments made by the City on OPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sometimes when negotiations are stalled because an application meets legal requirements but it “just doesn’t sit right”, the City advises the applicant to go see the City Councillor. One interviewee estimated 25% of plans are submitted to Aldermen for a decision, at which time the Alderman tell the file manager what to do. Some interviewees felt this process should not be made political. ➤ Direction from the top (senior management and politicians) sometimes causes deviation from CPAG process standards (i.e., there is pressure on planners to approve developments that may not meet all requirements). 	
The objectives of the final circulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The objective of the final circulation is to address the previous comments, not add new conditions, yet sometimes the City brings forward new conditions at this point.

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
City's ability to process and/or approve innovative approaches or standards in an expeditious manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Innovation is risky because it can mean different or relaxed standards; the City is relatively risk-averse and therefore it is more difficult to approve innovative approaches or standards. ➤ Innovation is also sometimes perceived as an excuse to give special, expedited treatment for those who "have connections" and do not want to follow the rules. In other words, there is a strong perception that innovation equals less. ➤ The City employees who were interviewed recognize it takes longer to review innovative applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CPAG approach does not help innovation or creative solutions. As one interviewee put it, "The present system does not encourage innovation; rather, it forces 'vanilla' solutions on the development community and stifles good ideas." ➤ Perceive civic staff members do not understand there is a very short construction season. To meet the timing, often a developer will have to compromise an idea just to get the approvals to start construction. This promotes the lowest common denominator. ➤ Staff holidays also cause delays as no one is responsible for follow through.
The effectiveness of the Decision Model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One interviewee indicated he/she did not like the Decision Model because planners may tend to side with other planners, and because many City employees do not support the decision model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments were made.
<i>Tentative Plan (TP) Process</i>		
The timeliness of the TP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel it is a timely process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel the tentative approval process is much too long; should take only six to eight weeks.
Participation in/ownership of the TP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments were made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Groups commenting at each stage should be appropriate to the plan. Referring to as many as 80 people is not useful at the tentative plan stage, particularly when reply timelines are not enforced.

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
The objectives/vision/goals of the TP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some feel the tentative plan process could be rolled in with the outline plan process. Because the City is requesting more and more detail sooner and sooner in the overall process, there is enough information to do the legal subdivision during the OP process. Problems also arise when an applicant wants to make changes to an approved outline plan at the tentative plan process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The tentative plan process seems to work alright as long as engineering plans are reviewed against existing standards and new ideas not injected at the last minute.
Accountability for the TP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Like the new system of measuring how long it takes for an application to be processed at this stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do not agree with the new system of measuring how long it takes for an application to be processed at this stage.
Electronic filing of tentative plans.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New process which is generating extra work for consultants. i.e. needing to scan DCT's
<i>Calgary Planning Council (CPC) Process</i>		
The effectiveness of the one-week timeframe given to file managers to write a report from the time an application is approved to the time it is to be presented at CPC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel this is not enough time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff cannot get reports written on time and as a result, applicant loses at least two weeks.
The City recommendation made to the CPC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Currently a simple pass/fail recommendation is made, based on the application's ability to meet minimum legal standards. Would prefer to be able to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments were made.

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
	make a qualified recommendation (e.g., D - Fails, C - Just barely meets minimum legal requirements, B - Does an average job of meeting minimum legal requirements, A - Significantly exceeds minimum requirements).	
The City's ability to present the application at CPC.	➤ No comments were made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel inexperienced file managers are bringing forward the applications. Staff is always second guessing what Council and CPC might want. They stray from adopted policy and standards. Administration needs to stand its ground. Senior Management needs to be at CPC. As interviewee said, "Senior staff needs to do the presentations at CPC because of knowledge of history and ability to deflect irrelevant questions and requests." ➤ CPC also prevents applicant from speaking, often resulting in delays to plans which meet the requirements.
The objectives/vision/goals of the CPC process.	No comments were made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel the CPC sometimes asks questions beyond its scope, and inexperienced File Managers try to respond rather than indicating the question is beyond the CPC's scope. As a result, developers/consultants are facing increasing pressure to include more and more in the applications, which increases the time involved.

Issue	Stakeholder Observations	
	<i>City's Feedback</i>	<i>UDI's Feedback</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some interviewees felt perhaps CPC's role should be to establish a policy framework, rather than review each application. ➤ One interviewee said, "Often ASPs are not followed, most often because of comments from CPC. Staff are focusing on 'what will sell at CPC', not on what plans state."
The dates for CPC presentations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The set Planning Commission dates can cause problems because the applicants try to shoehorn approvals into the time the CPC has available. This creates undue pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff tells consultants to pick which application they want to go forward, even though all are ready to go.

Major Themes That Emerged from the Stakeholder Consultation

Several themes emerged from the stakeholder consultation:

1. *There were divergent views about the best use of the pre-application process.* Currently, the official purpose is to identify major items (so called “showstoppers”) that could negatively affect an outline plan’s approval. However, while UDI members continue to feel the pre-application process is intended to identify major showstoppers, many City officials feel the pre-application process is an opportune time to identify both major and regular items they would like addressed. Indeed, City officials expressed frustration that UDI members do not take advantage of the comments provided to them during the pre-application process; City officials feel if UDI members were to take City officials’ comments into account sooner, the actual OP/TP processes could be carried out much faster.
2. *There were divergent views about the best process ownership for the pre-application process.* Currently a number of CPAG functional leads (who report to a File Manager) are involved in the pre-application process, which means the process has stretched out to several weeks. UDI would prefer to return to the process that was in place about ten years ago, when just the file manager reviewed the pre-application at a high level.
3. *There was confusion about external stakeholders’ role in the overarching planning process.* While external stakeholders welcomed the ability to comment on outline plan applications, they did not understand the way in which their feedback was used by City officials, communicated back to UDI members, and/or incorporated into the approved development plan. While consulting with external stakeholders is generally a good practice, the exact purpose of input from and role of external stakeholders in the OP/TP application processes is not clear. As external stakeholders noted, due to the City’s commitment to “triple bottom line” accountability to taxpayers, environmental and social considerations are supposed to be included alongside business considerations when a potential new development is being reviewed. Given City departments (e.g., Parks, Fire, etc.) already have a responsibility for bringing environmental and social considerations to the table; it may reduce external stakeholders’ frustration if their role is more clearly communicated to them. External stakeholders should understand they can provide input, but because they have



no accountability for the final outcomes, they cannot have greater authority for influencing the final outcomes.

4. Interviewees at the City generally feel e-filing and e-processing of tentative plan applications is working well. However, interviewees cautioned that because Outline Plans are more organic, it will take more effort to move to e-filing and e-processing of outline plans. Interviewees recommended the right technology will need to be in place (e.g., the ability to view and mark outline plans on screen, or to print off and mark outline plans in paper form and have those hand-written markings transferred into an electronic format) before the City moves to e-filing and e-processing for outline plans.

Important Conclusions from Stakeholder Consultation Process

Through the stakeholder consultation process, stakeholders identified seven major areas that could significantly improve the present outline and tentative plan approval processes:

1. There needs to be greater respect and understanding between the parties and a renewed focus on building relationships and consensus between the CPAG group and UDI members and consultants. The relationship needs to be less adversarial.
2. The policies adopted in Area Structure Plans must be clear and precise to allow Outline Plans to serve as tools for implementation of those policy directives.
3. There needs to be greater consistency and clarity in how City policies are applied. City policies should be clearer - minimum standards need to be confirmed as do areas where greater flexibility may be applicable. For example, the City needs to clarify major policy areas such as (higher density, transit-oriented development, or lower density development that maintains current road allowances). If there is consistency in standards as well as acceptance by all parties that a complete application is mandatory, there will be no need for exceptions to the processing of applications such as a “fast lane” approach that was suggested by a number of external stakeholders to expedite processing and approvals.



4. Outline Plan applications continue to be submitted without all of the required information. This is causing a problem for City staff as they attempt to commence the review process and comply with performance standards.
5. Someone needs to be in charge of the process and the dispute resolution mechanism needs to be appropriately communicated and applied.
6. The Pre-application process as it currently operates is lengthening the approval timelines and experienced developers are questioning the need for a process that adds little or no value particularly when the development meets all current development standards and specifications.
7. The City is in need of more staff resources that are both experienced and well trained to handle present and projected workloads. Personnel will need adequate mentoring, training and direction. If innovation is important to new development then staff will need guidance and training in this area and direction must be given so staff will know when it is okay to take a risk.



APPENDIX F:

**DRAFT PROTOCOL FOR ADOPTING
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS STANDARDS**



Protocol for Adopting Development Process Standards

Introduction

The Corporate Planning Approval Group (CPAG) is responsible for accepting, processing, reviewing and in some instances, approving land development applications. An important element in assuring consistent and timely performance of its mandate is the development of and uniform application of standards. These standards, whether they have their basis in good engineering practice, effective site design and land use, or attractive and useful open space, must be understood by all parties and must be fairly and uniformly applied.

Land development in Calgary is a combined responsibility of the municipal government and the development industry. The goal of both parties can be best described as achieving timely and thorough review that results in attractive development that will be economical to build and to maintain. Both parties believe that standards that are applied to developments should be understood, adopted in an open and clear process and be applied in a uniform manner.

Participants In and Process for Adopting Development Process Standards

Formal Group	Calgary Development Standards Committee (CSDC)
Status	Advisory Committee to the Civic Administration
Composition	Chair - Director, Development and Building Approvals Vice Chair - Urban Development Institute Board Member One Consulting Engineer One Senior Parks Planner One Member, Canadian Institute of Planners
Appointment Process	The consulting engineer will be nominated by the Urban Development Institute Board.



	<p>The Canadian Institute of Planners member will be nominated by the General Manager, Planning Development and Assessment. The Senior Parks Planner will be nominated by the General Manager, Community Services.</p>
Term of Office	<p>With the exception of the chair, all members will serve a maximum of two, two year terms. To provide continuity during the initial year of operation, the Consulting Engineer and Canadian Institute of Planners appointees will serve a term of one year.</p>
Alternates	<p>Alternates are permitted, provided the alternate has been designated at the same time as the nominee.</p>
Quorum	<p>A quorum is three members, one of which must be the UDI member or the consulting engineer.</p>
Meetings	<p>The CSDC will meet in the following manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. One annual meeting(s) to review all development standards. B. Quarterly meetings to review emerging issues affecting standards. C. At the call of the Chair to deal with emergency issues affecting standards.
Decisions	<p>Decisions of the committee affecting standards will be communicated through existing publications and the City of Calgary web site.</p>
Appeals	<p>The provisions of the Municipal Government Act apply.</p>



Committee Mandate

On behalf of the City of Calgary and the development industry, the Committee will review present and proposed standards necessary for an effective development process.

The committee will confirm which standards are in force, and will review proposed changes, additions and/or deletions prior to declaring the validity of particular standards.

The committee will determine:

- A method to certify that a standard has been adopted.
- A method to create, update and maintain an electronic data base of standards.
- A method to incorporate existing national standards and subsequent amendments into the CSDC data base.
- A method to deal with authorities that can preempt municipal regulations.

The committee's mandate does not over-ride other regulatory processes or established standards.

Standards - Definition A document specifying nationally, internationally and/or locally agreed properties of materials or design. Oxford Canadian Dictionary, 1998 Edition.

