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Town of Aurora

General Committee Report

No. CS23-030

Subject: Lessons Learned from Highland Gate Development

Prepared by: Jaclyn Grossi, Deputy Town Clerk

Department: Corporate Services

Date: May 16, 2023

Recommendation

1. That Report No. CS23-030 be received; and
2. That staff be directed to provide public input opportunities for residents affected by the Highland Gate development; and
3. That staff provide Council with a report after the public input opportunities have concluded to outline the feedback received and any process changes that will be adopted.

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council's direction on public input opportunities related to the Highland Gate development;

- Town staff from various departments host bi-monthly meetings to discuss the Highland Gate development
- Public input opportunities are a modern tool for staff and Council to learn how past developments affected residents

Background

At their meeting on July 12, 2022, Town of Aurora Council passed the following motion:

Whereas there have been many issues that have and continue to affect residents in the adjacent neighbourhood; and

Whereas the Town will be doing a substantial redevelopment through intensification in existing residential neighbourhoods; and

Whereas the Highland Gate development can provide us with valuable information and knowledge on how to improve the quality of life for those experiencing construction disruptions going forward;

Now Therefore Be It Hereby Resolved That this Council recommend to the next Council that a task force be formed to review lessons learned from the Highland Gate development.

As the 2022-2026 term of Council began on November 15, 2022, staff are looking for direction regarding this request. Staff recommend that the public be provided with options to provide their feedback regarding Highland Gate, and other developments in Town, instead of the Town forming a task force.

Analysis

As the Town of Aurora continues to grow and introduce new developments into our framework, staff are constantly learning and improving policies and processes to ensure that the public has ample opportunity to provide their comments on applications and to ensure that process of reviewing future developments take all lessons learned into consideration.

Town staff from various departments host bi-monthly meetings to discuss the Highland Gate development

The Director of Planning and Development Services meets monthly with representatives from the development team and other internal staff to ensure that ongoing matters are monitored and to provide an open communication channel.

Public input opportunities are a modern tool for staff and Council to learn how past developments affected residents

The traditional task force structure is founded on longer-term commitments by appointing small groups of people for a set period, such as a one-year term, or a four-year term concurrent with that of Council. By its nature, this model engages with a limited number of community voices and with new models of consultation and technological advancements, the Town is equipped to conduct broader community outreach to a diverse set of opinions. Council and staff have the opportunity to leverage alternative consultation models and increase participation from residents throughout

Town. Aurora has successfully used [Engage Aurora](#) for many large-scale projects including the Community Energy Plan, annual budgets, and by-law reviews which has allowed significantly more residents to provide input as opposed to a single task force.

Staff are recommending that the public be provided with options to provide their feedback regarding Highland Gate, and other developments in Town, as an opportunity to communicate with staff and voice details of their experiences. This can be through the Engage Aurora webpage or other webforms used regularly by the Town. If Council approves this recommendation, staff will work with the Communications team to develop these opportunities.

Staff will then provide Council with a report which outlines the themes heard from the public, and how staff plan to address them or how they are already being managed for current and future developments. The Town will also continue to provide exceptional customer service to residents who bring concerns forward, with tools like the [Compliments and Complaints Submission Form](#), and connect residents with the applicable staff members.

Advisory Committee Review

None.

Legal Considerations

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Communications Considerations

Legislative Services and Planning staff will inform the public of all opportunities for public consultation through regular communications channels.

Climate Change Considerations

The recommendations from this report do not impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation.

Link to Strategic Plan

The proposed public feedback opportunities support progressive corporate excellence and continuous improvement by implementing policies and processes that reflect sound and accountable governance.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. That a task force be established to review lessons learned from the Highland Gate development; and
2. That staff be directed to provide Council with draft Terms of Reference for approval.
3. Council provide direction.

Conclusions

Staff will continue to strive for improvement on all policies and procedures related to developments, and create opportunities for residents to provide feedback on their experiences related to projects throughout the Town.

Attachments

None.

Previous Reports

None.

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on April 27, 2023

Approvals

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer