

CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Response to Motion – Redistricting Notification Process

Purpose:

To provide Council with information in response to a motion passed by Council during the June 23, 2015 regular Council meeting regarding the redistricting notification process.

Background:

Public consultation is an important part of the planning process. When a developer submits an application to change the land use of a property, Planning & Development staff notify the affected landowners and the community through the following methods:

- a notification letter is mailed to landowners within a 60 metre radius of the proposed development; and
- a notification in the local paper is published for two consecutive weeks prior to the Public Hearing.

Through the processing of a redistricting application in 2015, concerns were raised regarding the notification process. In particular, concerns were raised regarding letter content, extent of area and delivery method. As a result, on June 23, 2015, Council approved a motion directing Administration to bring a report forward on notification procedures and suggestions for potential enhancements.

Notification Area

Typically, the notification area which has been used is a 60 metre radius from the proposed development. At times, this has been increased based on the potential impacts of the proposal (e.g. mall redevelopment and high density residential). Section 606 2(b) of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) states that notification must be “*mailed or delivered to every residence in the area to which the proposed bylaw, resolution or other thing relates, or in which the meeting or hearing is to be held.*” There is no reference to a specific notification radius.

For reference, the following notification areas are used by other municipalities in the region.

City of St. Albert	100 metres
Strathcona County	100 metres
City of Edmonton	60+ metres (often go beyond)
City of Leduc	61 metres
City of Spruce Grove	30 metres
Town of Stony Plain	90 metres – 300 metres

Enhancements

Administration is proposing that the notification radius for redistrictings be increased to 100 metres. This would be in keeping with other municipalities and enhance community engagement. Currently, the number of notification letters for a redistricting application can range from 50 to 150 letters, depending on the area. The increase is expected to almost double the number of letters sent out.

Notifications not Received

Through a redistricting application, concerns were raised that notices were not received for properties within the notification area. Planning & Development staff worked closely with the Information Technology Department to ensure that the software generating the address list was capturing all necessary addresses. Furthermore, Planning & Development staff manually checked the address list generated from the software for 8 months. Administration is now confident that the software is capturing the appropriate addresses.

Enhancement

Software was adjusted to ensure we are capturing appropriate addresses. No further enhancement necessary.

Notification Letter and Newspaper Advertisement

The notification letter and newspaper advertisement must contain certain information in order to meet MGA requirements. As such, they can come across as technical in nature and may be confusing to readers.

Enhancements

Working with a communications consultant, Administration has revised its templates to ensure that they will engage, involve and include residents. While certain technical information needs to be included, more plain language was used. Further, changes were made to ensure it is clear that the proposal is being put forward by the developer. The new and previous templates have been included in the Appendices.

Financial Impact:

Providing notifications to a greater area will result in a higher administrative cost. These cost will be taken into consideration during the annual Fees and Charges Bylaw review.

Attachments:

1. Appendix A – Revised Notification Letter
2. Appendix B – Previous Notification Letter
3. Appendix C - Revised Newspaper Advertisement
4. Appendix D – Previous Newspaper Advertisement

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