

Creating the right Environment for successful Downtown Development and Revitalization in Edmonton

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Background

Planning efforts and public money should be focused on the economic realities of revitalizing Edmonton's downtown core areas. A more coherent focus between Council's goals, City administration and the business community will lead to greater success in revitalizing Edmonton's downtown core.

Several plans that have been developed or are being developed in the downtown area that for a variety of reasons are not likely to lead to any immediate results and have not so far led to significant development activity. There is a perceived disconnect between the plans being developed by The City, and efforts of private developers who have invested in the area. We need to find ways to support existing developers within the plan areas. Private industry investment will lead new downtown development. Developer interest and participation is key to successful redevelopment plans.

Almost certainly an increase in dialogue would focus planning efforts on patterns of growth and market opportunities as opposed to perceived needs for redevelopment. There is a desire to share perspectives and reach consensus on how the City's planning resources can be deployed in the most effective way. An Edmonton Chamber of Commerce framework for assessing the viability of the City's plans for developing and revitalizing Edmonton's downtown precincts identifies key factors for rating the private sector appeal of the various development plans and can act as a proxy for the probability of plan or project completion. Although the ratings may be subjective they have been proposed as a starting point for sharing perspectives and engaging in productive dialogue between City Council, city planners and the business community.

Recommendation

That the City of Edmonton:

1. Adopt a framework and process for ongoing consultation and input that would result in a better alignment of municipal (political) and private sector (developer) priorities in the downtown precincts in Edmonton and lead to increased development activity of a high quality;
2. Using a specific set of criteria focus and target City resources and strategic infrastructure investments in Downtown Edmonton precincts to support initiatives that are aligned with private sector priorities and to leverage existing (and near future) developer driven projects.