


2020 FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON 2019 INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLES

Okotoks Economic Development



Agenda

- Welcome
 - Introductions
 - Roundtable Update
 - Q and A
 - Land Use Bylaw
 - Q and A
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Organized by:

- Regulation
- Process
- People/Relationships
- Communication
- Other

ROUNDTABLES 2019 ACTION PLAN

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

- ▶ Review Major DP requirements; research alternative models (agreements, performance security)
- ▶ Improvement of pre-application process and timelines for commercial approvals
- ▶ Cross-training / process improvement for front line and support staff
- ▶ Review of larger-scale development prioritization
- ▶ Educate developers regarding current process
- ▶ Improve safety inspection timelines
- ▶ Combine development permits, building permits, licensing where practical
- ▶ Undertake a broad review of Development Permit timelines
- ▶ Investigate/Implement an online permit system
- ▶ Create a checklist for new businesses
- ▶ Consider offering reduced timelines for increased fees where practical
- ▶ Review opt-in/opt-out of business directory

WHAT WE **HEARD**: PROCESS

Business Intake Form was launched in June, 2020

Land Use Bylaw Amendments were adopted by Council in 2019/2020

- ▶ Added to the list of commercial and industrial business types allowed in the downtown commercial district and two industrial districts
- ▶ Increased the number of business start-ups exempt from a development permit
- ▶ Further expanded the types of businesses that are exempt from a development permit
- ▶ Simplified and reduced the documentation requirements to accompany a development permit application
- ▶ Changed advertising requirements from weekly newspaper to Town website to reduce waiting time for permit release
- ▶ Added to Administration's approval authority to speed up process

WHAT WE DID: PROCESS

E-Permitting System

- ▶ Project commenced in 2020
- ▶ Anticipated to roll out in phases, with completion by end of 2021:
 - Phase 1 - Development Permits
 - Phase 2 - Building Permits & Fire Inspections
 - Phase 3 - Business Licenses
- ▶ The project is intended to streamline all aspects of permitting and inspections, and improve communication, convenience for users, and clarity.

WHAT WE DID: PROCESS

▶ **Schedule of Fees**

- Development permit fees for signs and small-scale storefront and home-based start-ups were reduced by \$175
- In response to Covid, development permit and certificate of compliance fees were waived for summer, 2020.

▶ **Safety Codes**

WHAT WE DID: PROCESS

- ▶ The Town's Customer Service Standards specifies acknowledgment of phone calls within one business day

- ▶ Concerns in relation to snow removal.

A meeting with Transportation Services can be scheduled with affected business groups (Chamber of Commerce, RDBA). Contact Economic Development to arrange.

WHAT WE DID: PROCESS

- ▶ Train front-line staff regarding process for referrals; Creation of “cheat sheet” for front-line; Shadowing of Planners
- ▶ Send potential lease prospects to all who have space
- ▶ Create drone footage of communities and commercial districts (VR Project)
- ▶ Review of cost-sharing opportunities in joint marketing initiatives
- ▶ Procurement training for contractors and subs
- ▶ Town should support local when purchasing
- ▶ Business engagement review

WHAT WE HEARD: PEOPLE/RELATIONSHIPS

- ▶ Front-line training complete
- ▶ Online marketing packages
- ▶ Drone training is in progress; footage in spring/summer 2021.
- ▶ Virtual Reality project has been completed and video is available on website.
- ▶ Work with formal and informal business supports (Okotoks Entrepreneurial Ecosystem – OEE – formed May/20, River District Business Association –RDBA – formed February/20, Chamber of Commerce etc.) to identify and pursue opportunities - ongoing

WHAT WE DID:
PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

- ▶ Public Tenders are available on okotoks.ca under Your Business/Investing and Projects.
- ▶ A public information campaign is in the planning stages on Town's purchasing policy
- ▶ Ongoing engagement improvement efforts in collaboration with business stakeholders

WHAT WE DID: PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

“Made in Okotoks” Co work Model

- ▶ Largely business-driven: currently there are locations at Community Futures Highwood, StudioMe and Miles Display.
- ▶ Land Use Bylaw rewrite will further enable co-working with more flexible regulation

WHAT WE DID:
PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Website should include: development permit process, available land for sale/lease, home occupation page, business news, one-stop shop information, business resource list, organizational chart, business vs. homeowner information, parking requirements
- One stop shop for business
- Provide regular communication to the business sector
- Business Engagement

WHAT WE HEARD: COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Improved flow and ease of use. Permit information to be arranged by project type, not by department.
- ▶ Organizational Chart with departmental contact info will be included as part of the upgrades.
- ▶ Home occupation requirements and cowork space information will be located on one page
- ▶ All requested items will be incorporated.

- ▶ Website refresh targeted for completion December 31, 2020

WHAT WE DID: COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Learning opportunities for Roundtable participants
- ▶ Motivate youth and millennial activity in the business community
- ▶ Provision of information to the business community regarding Subdivision and Development Appeal Board process ; Review cost of development appeals; Review who can appeal

WHAT WE HEARD: COMMUNICATION

- ▶ List of requested learning opportunities referred to business support stakeholders as outlined in Roundtables report, December, 2019
- ▶ Town will share information on opportunities to engage youth with business support services as they arise.
- ▶ Subdivision and Development appeals are provincially legislated. Information regarding process is available on the Town's website. Fees are reviewed annually under the Rates and Fees Bylaw.

WHAT WE DID: COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Businesses can contact Economic Development directly for assistance in navigating Town requirements and services.
- ▶ Online Business Intake Form and E-Permitting will enhance online services for business

WHAT WE DID:
COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Working to improve social media strategy to get more information out faster – Ongoing
- ▶ Monthly Ec Dev newsletters will be resumed starting in 2021 and will be available on the website with notification by social media
 - * by email to businesses who have consented to receive emails from Economic Development.
- ▶ Economic Development meets regularly with Okotoks Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Chamber of Commerce, and River District Business Association to share information and promote ongoing collaboration.

WHAT WE DID: COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Opportunities for input into Town projects are provided via social media and the Town website, as well as direct notification to OEE and RDBA.
- ▶ Go to okotoks.ca/public-participation and select the project.
- ▶ Participate in webinars, meetings or surveys, or send your feedback directly to the project manager using the phone number or email link provided at the bottom of each project page.
- ▶ Suggestions for improvements to how the Town engages with business are always welcome.

WHAT WE DID: COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Okotoks needs a sustainable water supply
 - A sub-regional water project has been approved and design work is in progress to bring a water pipeline from the Bow River.
 - See okotoks.ca/your-government/newsroom. See also Town and Foothills County Regional Water Q&A on Town of Okotoks youtube channel.

- ▶ Build a parkade in the downtown
 - Downtown parking lot was included in grant funding application for Province of Alberta Municipal Stimulus Program funding: \$1.2M
 - Submission September, 2020; Construction 2021 if approved

WHAT WE HEARD: OTHER

- ▶ Review of Permitted/Discretionary Uses
- ▶ Review for fewer zones
- ▶ Review of parking strategies
- ▶ Dedicated bike lanes and traffic circles
- ▶ More mixed-use development
- ▶ Greater residential density
- ▶ Architectural controls in downtown
- ▶ Review sign regulations
- ▶ Co-work, incubation, satellite offices
- ▶ Give administration more authority for approvals

WHAT WE HEARD: REGULATION

LAND USE BYLAW REWRITE

- ▶ First draft is available for review at:
okotoks.ca/public-participation/land-use-bylaw-rewrite
- ▶ Survey open until December 7, 2020

Surveys and webinars not your thing? Comments can be provided directly to the project team by calling 403-995-2760 or emailing planning@okotoks.ca

WHAT WE DID: REGULATION

- ▶ Did we miss any important points?
- ▶ What specific actions would you recommend to keep the conversation going?
- ▶ How do you prefer to receive information from the Town?
- ▶ How do you prefer to engage with the Town on projects that affect your business?

HOW DID WE DO?

We are your one-stop shop to connect with the
Town on matters of importance to your business.

OKOTOKS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ecdevokotoks@okotoks.ca

403-938-8052

LET'S KEEP THE CONVERSATION
GOING!