

Conversations: Planning Transportation Corridors Workshop

Case study verbatim notes

March 8, 2014

On March 8, Transportation Planning invited external stakeholders and citizens to attend either a morning or afternoon workshop to learn more about the Transportation Corridor Study Review Project and to “share learning” about what has been heard through previous engagement, through research into best practices and previous case studies.

In total, approximately 25 people attended the meeting where the project team asked attendees to put themselves in the position of The City of Calgary Transportation Planning team and use a provided fictitious transportation corridor study scenario to create a plan for communicating and engaging the public.

The case study exercise was created to help both the project team understand the priorities of the stakeholders and citizens as well as to share the process The City must undertake during most corridor study projects. The exercise was designed to create “shared learning” between the project team and attendees for the next phase of the project in which external stakeholders and citizens will be asked to help write the new transportation corridor study policy.

Descriptions of the case study exercise and attendee verbatim notes are below. The input from attendees will be used to help create the Transportation Corridor Study Terms of Reference Policy.

Description:

The Transportation department has identified a city road that needs to be upgraded. The road will need to accommodate future traffic volume increases as well as walking, cycling and transit routes. This road has been identified as part of the primary transit and cycling network by the Calgary Transportation Plan. There was a functional plan that was completed in the late 1970s that showed that this road should be widened from four to six lanes to handle future traffic volume increases.

The road runs through the inner city and connects to the downtown core. It is located within a residential area with an elementary school, a small shopping centre and some other small businesses. The road connects to the east end of downtown and connects to a freeway at the west end of the roadway.

The project team must undertake a transportation corridor study to identify future plans for the corridor and has been directed by City Council to develop and present the plan by June 2015 for approval.

Instructions:

Working with the group at your table, put yourself in the role of the City of Calgary Transportation Planning team to plan how to involve the public in the development of the urban transportation corridor study described above. You are encouraged to discuss the case study with your group and work together to fill out the questions below. You will have approximately 30 minutes to complete the questions.

You will need to designate someone in your group to write down your answers and someone else to be the spokesperson for your group.

Questions

1. Using the transportation corridor study planning process handout on your table, identify all points in the planning process when the public should be involved.

- Green, blue, red iterations
- Identify and detail study area and needs for all participants create short summary of key MDP/CTP principles thought to be most important in this context. Debate this and execute ownership, on which ones are key, not to disagree with MDP/CTP!!
- Green, blue, red
 - Identify and define study areas and needs
 - Develop possible transportation corridor concepts
 - Identify preferred transportation corridor concepts
 - Info session after to explain to community the decision. Provide a written rationale for later review by citizens
- Study area, evaluation. Identify preferred transportation concept
- Extend the invitation at the original stage (project initiation) to high level members of community associations and others interested in planning. We suspect more of the public will join as the process evolves. The public should be involved (or at least invited) in all other stages except (policy screening); developing possible corridor concepts (for broader corridor studies) and the analysis of corridor concepts
- Why have they identified if for upgrading? What do you mean by upgraded?
- Identify and define study around needs
- Develop list of evaluation criteria
- Identify transportation corridor concepts for analysis
- Problem identification
- Forming what is important/ground rules/context of what is needed

2. Please identify all the stakeholders the project team should invite to participate in the project's public engagement/consultation plan

- Directly affected stakeholders, public
- Indirectly affected stakeholders

- General public, those interested
- Urban planning
- Long term planners
- Project/corridor planners
- Local businesses
- School's parents
- Community parents
- Motorists
- Pedestrians
- Cyclist
- Residents
- Nearby communities
- City-wide consultations
- Minority groups
- Cultural people to show respect of special sites that might be affected
- Community Associations; local business owners; institutions affected, all affected. City groups; school board if affected; public institutions offering services to the community; non-profit/non government organizations with a profile that relates (Bike Calgary, Sustainable Calgary) How can we engage minorities, those new to Calgary and all class groups? Religions groups in the affected area
- Home owners
- CA/RA's
- Businesses
- Local residents
- Local businesses
- Parents
- Commuters – driving
- Transit user
- Recreational users
- No restrictions. Key is far and wide multi modal promotion
- Silent minority – outside immediate area
- Local people community
- People of interest
- Experts
- Expectation that internally the departments have talked to each other and the problem and presented solution have had the necessary informal review and dissertation.

3. Please list all the ways you would tell the public about the project and invite them to participate in the project?

- City website

- Print media
- Radio
- TV
- Email list – direct
- Community Associations – newsletters
- Council mailing lists
- Web
- 311
- Public consultation
- Social media
- Door to door flyers
- Community newspaper
- Media, tv/papers
- Target specific groups
- Use Federation of Calgary Communities
- Use LUPP email list for community association contacts
- Road signage
- Community papers
- Community bold signs
- Newsletters (community association) ads
- Alderman – email
- Tell community association to disseminate
- Email list – transportation
- Media
- City website
- Business ads
- Just the way it happens now, plus intensify advertising of small event – road signs etc.
- Website, facebook, twitter, mail drops; using community associations to communicate to individual residents, business associations, school boards in community buildings and grocery stores, etc. Interactive map for City of Calgary that shows policy & planning concerns in my area. Engaging church groups to communicate to affected areas.
- Internet
- At shopping centres (display)
- Ads on transport
- Ads on community centres
- Radio ads during rush hour
- Online advertising
- Community pamphlets
- Mobile/Smart Phone ads
- Communicate fairs at community arenas

- YouTube – targeted advertising
- Holding permanent, periodic, pre-scheduled City of Calgary engagement/info/feedback sessions at multiple locations in the city ex. Every 2-3 months. At these multiple projects can be shown to illustrate and use the strength of the integration across departments of the City.
- Web
- Open houses
- Working sessions
- Road side light signs

4. What types of engagement activities would you plan during the project? How many activities would you include in your engagement plan?

- Corridor need framing
- Give stakeholders an opportunity to do a SWOT analysis of the issues. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
- Not a stand alone “activity” or event, but an ongoing dialogue. Combination of in person and online activities. Can we use LRT stations in addition to Farmers Market and Plus 15’s to reach out to more people? A larger scale project should include more activities. Formalized, regularly scheduled engagement sessions, rather than ad hoc project by project basis.
- Small displays at malls, like Action Plan
- Open houses
- Workshops
- Depends on the size of the project
- Open houses
- Online surveys
- Focused work group for key stakeholders – early on
- Identify key city contacts
- Would depend on the project, this case study does not have the details to determine this.
- Pick an engagement period and consult based on that duration. Based on size of project and need (immediate or future)

5. What kinds of questions would you ask the public at your engagement events? What parts of the transportation corridor study project require public feedback? What parts do not?

- What problems are we solving?
- What are the options?
- What are the costs?
- How does it affect you? Have you read 30 year plans? What have we missed? What are your needs? Does it meet your lifestyle?
- What is the problem we are trying to solve?

- What is more important to your community?
- What improvements can you identify to make this project better?
- Which option do you prefer?
- What have we missed in our assessment?
- Does the older plan make sense?
- What is it worth?
- Impact on homes/businesses?
- Importance of plan?
- Traffic impact?
- Safety for all including pedestrians and cyclists
- What are the current problems and assets in your area?
- Where do you live?
- How do you get around?
- Questions should be asked throughout. The first stage can ask broader, visioning questions.
- What is important to you as we consider changing this corridor? Would apply to establishing evaluation criteria stage.
- What is most important to you?
- Will this impact you?
- What solution is most important to you?

6. How would you use the feedback from public to make decisions about the project? How would you know when public engagement is complete?

- To guide/evaluate stakeholders needs, community characteristics
- Speed limits. Infrastructure design
- Public feedback should have as much sway as policy (within budget restraints providing it doesn't violate policy) and should be constantly referred to as potential solutions are considered. You know public engagement is complete when there's significant buy in from stakeholders & community associations when there is a feeling of consensus that all stakeholders have been consulted and had their opportunity to participate (consensus as per transforming planning or next city), then public engagement is complete
- Difference of opinion need to be adhered. Find themes. Check impact on city-wide plans
- Balance of professional expertise vs. Community feedback. Following the choice of a single option
- Use feedback to identify themes and render judgement to comment about this. Ie. Tell people when it is in scope and use other stuff to guide future education efforts to correct misunderstanding or unacceptable attitudes.
- It is complete when designated time is up. Take feedback as input however blend with bigger picture and expert knowledge. Sometimes you will upset people and its okay.

7. Please list other comments/items your project team considered or discussed during the planning of the transportation corridor study project?

- Alderman don't consider future and limit decision to future election success. Analysis can't last forever. Limit to a reasonable timeframe
- Iterations: mandatory reviews? Ways of ensuring the debate does not devolve into a common
- Need to focus on establishing meetings or feedback from stakeholders who are truly affected. Meetings/feedback opportunities must be accessible to all these diverse groups equally, across all age groups as well.
- Need to be aware of community culture and avoid changing it too much
- Please further describe the "SPD" process. This was brought up at our table as another opportunity for using/getting citizen feedback.