



News Release
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Council Approves Downtown Action Plan and Related Land Use Bylaw Amendments

(September 15, 2017 – Ponoka, Alberta) – Ponoka Town Council formally adopted the Downtown Action Plan at its regular meeting this week and approved the proposed Land Use Bylaw required to implement parts of the plan.

Long-Term Implementation Plan

“The next step will be to create a long-term implementation plan,” says Tim Schmidt, Director of Planning and Development for the Town of Ponoka. Schmidt says Town staff will work with the Heritage and Downtown Revitalization Committee (HDRC), which is also the Steering Committee for the Downtown Action Plan, to create an implementation plan that will coordinate priorities, timelines and proposed budgeting options on an annual basis to implement various components and suggested actions outlined in the Downtown Action Plan over the next 15 to 20 years.

“The role of the HDRC will be to continue promoting implementation of the Downtown Action Plan to Town Council,” says Greg Braat, Chair of the HDRC. “Our committee plans to do that by using the implementation plan currently being drafted to make annual recommendations to Town Council identifying specific components of the plan that we recommend the Town implement each year,” he explains.

A General Guide for Downtown Development

The purpose of the Downtown Action Plan, as stated in the resolution adopted by Council this week, is to be a general guide for the Town – not a rigid set of prescriptions – in the planning of physical improvements in the Downtown, and in efforts to attract increased levels of tourist and customer patronage in the Downtown.

“The resolution ensures that refinement and adjustments to the Plan will be possible over the life of the plan without requiring any amendments to the Plan,” says Schmidt.

The Downtown Action Plan package that was presented to Council for approval this week included a summary of comments made by members of the public at a public hearing on the Downtown Action Plan in August. Those comments, along with a response from Administration addressing the issues raised in each comment, will be posted on the Downtown Action Plan website at www.DowntownPonoka.ca under the Newsroom tab. The Downtown Action Plan is also available for viewing on that same website.

The Downtown Action Plan now approved by Council includes:

- An updated vision for Downtown Ponoka.



- A series of suggested actions to encourage future growth, development and improvement of the Downtown.
- A recommended design for future streetscape improvements that are expected to be implemented in phases over time in conjunction with any planned replacement of underground infrastructure. The recommended streetscape design includes surface improvement features such as trees and landscaping, concrete patterns in the sidewalk, and street furniture.
- A plan for managing parking.
- A marketing strategy.

The proposed Land Use Bylaw amendments (Bylaw No. 387-17) approved by Council include:

- Architectural guidelines for future development of buildings Downtown.
- A heritage preservation overlay that identifies sites of historical interest and requires a review of the property prior to major changes.
- The removal of on-site parking requirements for non-residential development Downtown, which recognizes the available supply of existing parking Downtown and a desire to create a busier, more prosperous Downtown.

The Downtown Action Plan is the result of a citizen-driven planning process over the past year which gathered public input and ideas at three public open houses and a community-wide survey, which was used to help create the Plan approved by Council this week.

“Our committee is excited to see the Downtown Action Plan approved and moving on to the implementation stage. Our ultimate goal as we move ahead with planning the implementation of the Downtown Action Plan continues to be the creation of a vibrant community hub in our Downtown that will be a catalyst for future economic growth in Ponoka,” says Braat.

For regular updates on the Downtown Action Plan, please visit www.DowntownPonoka.ca

For more information:

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