

Memo



To: Committee of the Whole
From: **Corporate Services**
Date: 2023-12-11
Subject: Boundary Extension Timeline Update and Open House Format

Purpose

For the Committee of the Whole (COTW) to review the updated Boundary Extension timeline and discuss possible formats for an open house.

Background

At the October 10, 2023, Regular Meeting, Council provided direction regarding potential tax rates limits and potential zoning changes for the landowners in the affected boundary extension area. The full report from the meeting is attached and the resolution below was adopted by Council at that time.

Tax Rate Limits:

THAT Council instructs Staff to recommend to the Province to utilize an up to 15 year tax rate limit for the Residential 4 zoned properties in the proposed boundary extension area; FURTHER THAT Council instructs Staff to recommend to the Province to utilize additional tax rate limits of 15 years for the single Residential farm house property, if possible. AND FURTHER THAT Council instruct Staff to recommend to the Province to utilize additional tax rate limits of 15 years for the Business Class property, if possible.

Zoning/Water/Sewer:

THAT Council instructs staff to advise the affected Residential 4 landowners, that if the boundary extension is successful, at this time, no drastic changes to the current land use and water/sewer servicing requirements are anticipated; AND THAT, if the boundary extension is successful, Staff is instructed to prepare necessary bylaws for Council review, following all legislative processes.

Thanks to these resolutions, our communications consultants were able to finalize the landowner packages and some of the first one-one-one meetings with those landowners were held in the week of November 13, 2023. We anticipate that the remaining interviews will be complete by mid December.

Timeline Update

Some of the other feedback that we have received from delegates at Council meetings, through newspaper opinion posts, and through the boundaryextension@grandforks.ca email address, indicated the need to adjust the original proposed timelines and advance the first public open house opportunity to engage with Council and the consultants in a meaningful way once some key information about the development are known and the majority of the initial consultation process is completed.

The consultant also determined that the first round of written feedback, outside of the First Nations consultations, should be concluded as of December 14, 2023, at the end of day to allow them to prepare the “What we heard” summary and to update materials in preparation for the open house based on the feedback received thus far.

A request to extend the response deadline for First Nations was received in late October and as such that consultation deadline for First Nations was extended to early January 2024 to allow for a wholesome response by area indigenous nations.

Given all of the above, the Tentative Timeline has been updated to reflect the changes due to the extension requests from First Nations as well as to prepare an open house public engagement opportunity between late-January and mid-February. The updated Timeline can be found below.

Open House Format

At this time, Staff is planning the in-person open house with presentation stations that can accommodate discussions at each station. To ensure that all attendees receive the same information when they arrive, staff will prepare a handout that highlights the overall project. This is intended to accommodate members of the public that arrive after the beginning of the open house and to allow a flow of participants throughout the allocated time. Each station will then provide an opportunity for the public to provide additional feedback and have discussions directly with the consultants.

Staff has used this format successfully in the past as part of the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) projects, in particular for the downtown dike, and as part of the Official Community Plan update.

Once a date and venue has been established (we hope to utilize the Seniors Center), Staff will be advertising the opportunity through our usual channels and allow for an RSVP option to determine if the venue is sufficient or if we have to alter the location to a venue that can accommodate a larger number of persons.

Various different format options (Presentation followed by Q&A; smaller presentation to start and then breakout discussions; etc.) were considered to host this open house. The format detailed above was ultimately recommended by the consultant based on the outcomes that we intend to achieve (providing an opportunity for members of the public to provide meaningful feedback).

Developer Update

One of the key concerns that has come up from some of the feedback received is the connection between the Boundary Extension project and the proposed Copper Sky development and some of the certainties around the development. As such, Staff has reached out to the developer to collect some additional information. The intent would be to present this information at a Council meeting before the open house to ensure that answers can be provided to Council and at the public event thereafter.

Strategic Impact

Council's Strategic Plan for 2023 included the following priority and assign actions and results.

Priority: Create Opportunities for Additional Housing Development in Grand Forks

Goal 1.: Apply to the Provincial Government to Expand the City of Grand Forks Municipal Boundary

Actions to get us there:

- Secure a consultant to guide the City through the boundary expansion application process – **in progress**
- Create a schedule which clearly outlines a timeline and benchmarks for public engagement opportunities, communication, external agency referrals, technical data, stakeholder feedback, and any other major steps within the application process – **completed in August 2023**
- Provide Council with regular updates through the Committee of the Whole – **in progress**
- Council to determine electoral approval process (Alternate Approval Process or Referendum) – **not started**

The Results We Want to See:

A complete and compliant boundary expansion application ready for submission to the Provincial Government within 10 months – **slight delay due to external factors (First Nations engagement)**

Tentative Timeline

Changes are highlighted in yellow.

Activity	Public Engagement	Tentative Date
Kick off Meetings		August 2023 - complete
Develop Communications and Engagement Plan		August 2023 – complete – will continue to evolve
Develop Communications Materials		August / September 2023 complete – will continue to evolve
Landowner Resident Information Package – Initial contact		September 2023 - complete
Engagement with Local Governments / Indigenous Communities / etc. as per provincial requirements in Step 1 – First Nations engagement extended by 60 days	Yes (specific)	September / October / November / December 2023 / January 2024
Landowner Resident Information Package – Full package		October 2023
Landowner Interviews (for affected property owners)	Yes (specific)	November / December 2023
Deadline for written feedback for first phase of engagement		December 14, 2023
What we heard Summary		January 2024
In Person Open House	Yes	January / February 2024
Council Meeting to determine if all information has been collected for submission to the Province		February / March 2024
Combine all information and Submit to the Province (Step 2 of Provincial Guide)		February / March 2024
Ministry Review (Step 3) – unknown time frame, reaching out to the Province for feedback on that timeline		TBD
Communications Material Update		Continuous
Virtual Information Session	Yes	TBD – possibly April / May 2024
Prepare Information Packages for electoral Approval		TBD – possibly April / May 2024
Electoral Approval Process (timeline depending on Ministry Review) (Step 4)	Yes	TBD – possibly May / June 2024
Prepare Package for final Provincial Approval		TBD – possibly June / July 2024
Final Submission to the Province (Step 5) for Approval		TBD – possibly July / August 2024