



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

REMOVE REFERENCE TO INNOVATION AND 'LEADING EDGE' CONTENT

On September 6, 2016, Councillor Mackay provided notice in accordance with Section 23 of Procedure Bylaw 35/2009 of intent to bring forward the following motion:

That the Smart City Master Plan be amended to remove any reference to the City striving to be leading edge, including proposed Living Lab priorities, centre of excellence promotion, municipal innovation efforts, and to the conduct of pilot testing of new, experimental, or otherwise unproven technologies or services.

BACKGROUND:

If this motion is carried by Council, Administration would amend the Smart City Master Plan to remove any reference to the City striving to be leading edge, and would remove proposed strategies regarding Living Lab advancement, centre of excellence promotion, municipal innovation efforts, and the conduct of pilot testing of new, experimental, or otherwise unproven technologies or services.

The proposed motion is subject to interpretation as: 1. either being related to risk tolerance rather than aversion to the concepts of innovation and testing of new ideas that are fundamental and inherent to the Master Plan; or, 2. if taken literally, the removal of all concepts encapsulated in the motion. Not being clear what the intent is, Administration seeks clarification prior to the passing of the motion.

The following two implications are provided:

1. Adjusting the Master Plan to Clarify Risk Mitigation

While there is no specific reference to being “leading edge” within the Master Plan, it does seek to encourage innovation, experimentation, pilot testing, and general leadership of others seeking solutions to their challenges. Without innovation within the municipal corporation and in the broader community, many of the goals of the Master Plan could not be achieved. Finding new ways to approach old problems, or to do more with less, are critical to St. Albert’s future.

The Smart City Steering Committee believed that the City should not adopt unproven technologies or pursue every potential new solution – a strategic and careful approach is required. Actions should be aligned to the needs of the

community and maintain a clear commitment to the goals of efficiency, economic development, and service delivery. The City would not seek to invent new approaches or solutions in areas that would involve significant cost or risk.

The benefit of innovation, pilot testing, etc. are also related to economic development and establishing St. Albert as attractive place for innovative businesses. This complements how the City would learn first hand about ways it can adopt technology. The identification and picking of Smart City projects would be done carefully, as the intent would be not for a wide-spread application of such approaches but to be open to such when mutually beneficial.

The prioritization of strategies within the Master Plan reflects the above philosophies, as does the requirement for new projects to be approved through a business case or capital charter which are considered by Council before implementation.

To better articulate and to be explicit about approaches for what may come across in the plan as risky ventures, each strategy that references the “proposed Living Lab priorities, centre of excellence promotion, municipal innovation efforts, and to the conduct of pilot testing of new, experimental, or otherwise unproven technologies or services”, would be clarified with caveats that considerations of any of the above would require risk assessment and mitigation strategies, and brought to Council prior to implementation.

2. Removal of References to Innovative or Leading Edge Content

A listing of strategies that would be affected by this motion is provided below. While what is considered ‘leading edge’ by some may differ from the perspective of others, an attempt has been made to quantify the effect to the Master Plan. The affected strategies, the implication of removal, and their corresponding location within the full reference version of the Smart City Master Plan (for additional context on each), is provided.

Affected Strategy	Brief Implication of Removal	More Details
A3 – Municipal Innovation and Idea Sharing	Adjusting this high priority strategy would de-emphasize municipal innovation and the sharing of ideas within City Administration and outside of the organization. This would also remove the concept of a corporate innovation program, related supports, training, collaboration tools, engagement in knowledge networks, and support for academic institution projects. For example, the City has completed a number of research projects with NAIT that resulted in new information at no cost to the City at all, or	pp. 33-38

	participated in joint projects such as the construction of the St. Albert Clock Tower to assess construction materials over time. If a focus on innovation was removed there would be an expected impact on the City's ability to attract and retain quality employees, and to maintain an efficient, progressive municipality over time.	
A4 – Local Innovation, Digital Literacy, Co-Creation	Adjusting this medium priority strategy would remove references to the City supporting greater community innovation capacity, testing services in partnership with community members, and co-creating new programs and services with interested public as well. This could have an impact on the City's service delivery objectives over time, and the community's general innovation capacity.	pp. 39-42
B3 – Smart Economic Reputation and Supports (Centre of Excellence Promotion)	Adjusting this medium priority strategy would remove references to the City promoting itself as a Smart City 'centre of excellence' (national Smart City reference site) and the designation of innovation district(s) within St. Albert. This would have an impact on the City's economic development and reputational objectives.	pp. 51-55
B4 – Collaborative Innovation and Testing (Living Lab)	Adjusting this high priority strategy would remove the recommendation to position St. Albert as a 'living lab', and support for a multi-sector innovation centre in partnership with others. Removing the living lab priority has particular impact, as the concept can support testing of new products, services, partnerships, regulations, and support the growth of new companies and ideas. Stakeholders were also very supportive of the living lab opportunity for St. Albert.	pp. 55-57

In addition to the above impacts, Administration has identified additional strategies that would likely be affected.

Affected Strategy	Brief Implication	More Details
C4 – Future Transportation Technologies and Modes	Adjusting this low priority strategy would ignore the recommendation to review the future local implications of connected and autonomous vehicles, avoid serving as a pilot community for these types of emerging vehicle technologies, and remove the notion of policy to respond to transportation innovations. While the impact of this may be minimal in the short term, the world is changing fast and implications could increase over time.	pp. 67-69
E1 - Public Amenity and Event Technology Integration	Adjusting this low priority strategy would remove the installation of new technologies in public amenities, and de-emphasize the use of new technologies for local events and festivals. This could impact the public perception of how Smart City integrates with the community, and possibly impact amenity satisfaction over time.	pp. 80-82
E3 – Digital City Services and Public Engagement	Adjusting this medium priority strategy would reduce the emphasis on expanding digital services in areas that are new or unproven. For example, the advancement of a consolidated City mobile application would be removed, as would new means to engage stakeholders digitally, as would the concept of a community digital ID (likely connected to provincial efforts). Similar to other strategies, this would have an impact over time to the City's ability to deliver programs and services efficiently, and in a manner valued by local residents.	pp. 88-95
F4 – Municipal Purchasing Innovation	Adjusting this low priority strategy would reduce the emphasis on seeking alternative, leading edge solutions from City bidders and	p. 109

	suppliers. While some degree of innovation would always be sought, any solution that is unproven or uncommon across Canada may either be ignored or rejected.	
IM.5 - Change Management Support	Adjusting this high priority strategy would reduce the emphasis on robust change management supports connected in some part to the above reduction of municipal innovation supports and the need for employees or residents to work with new technologies or leading edge solutions.	pp. 120-121
IM.7 – City Innovation Fund	Removing this high priority strategy would eliminate the concept of an innovation fund. Part of the intent of an innovation fund is to support the identification and delivery of new partnership arrangements and to advance the application of new technologies or approaches in a more efficient manner. An innovation fund benefits all three of the Master Plan's objectives – municipal efficiency, service delivery, and economic development.	p. 123

Removing the reference as contemplated in the motion from within the Master Plan would have a significant impact on its direction.

If the motion is approved, Administration will ensure that other references within strategies to concepts that could be deemed to be leading edge would be removed as well.

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