



Bob van Wegen & Taryn Hayes

LUB and Process Review

Last month’s newsletter referred to a consultant report on streamlining the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and City Planning processes. Council gave some direction for amending the LUB, including: Grouping commercial use categories to streamline commercial change of use applications; developing contextual design standards for semi-detached residences (i.e. like the single detached contextual); exempt small parcels from non-residential off-street parking and loading requirements; reviewing/simplifying bike parking requirements; examining the potential for use of objective standards in the LUB (i.e. firmer rules, less discretion) and establishing a forum with community and industry representation to advise on the implementation of the Land Use Bylaw and Process Review. Administration will report back on short term process improvements in June, and will provide a status report on all the consultant recommendations before the end of 2010. Work on some things (like contextual semi-detached) will probably continue into 2011. Contact the Federation planners if you want a copy of the consultant report. It is interesting reading.

Infill Issues Updates

On May 6 about 20 CA reps attended a workshop on infill housing issues with the City and the Federation. Most were from the inner city area that is included in the Infill Guideline boundary (originally set in 1993), but about a third were from other communities where infill activity is now taking place. The City is bringing forward changes to the Guidelines to align them with changes made by City Council to the LUB (notably the 65/35 rule that supercedes 60/40 lot depth). Following a presentation and Q&A on this, the Federation planners conducted a workshop portion to allow communities to express their concerns feelings about infills more generally

Key issues included:

- Size (height, mass, lot coverage) of new infill development including the size of the “contextual” envelope, the size of discretionary infills, and the

resulting impact on neighbours, landscaping and community character;

- The ability of new development to fit with the existing context, including in terms of size and design;
- The issue of whether front-drive access should be allowed (or should continue) in infill situations where the back lane is accessible;
- Perceived lack of consistency in the development review process, including planner’s use of discretion (e.g. unjustified relaxations and excessive size), application of the Infill Guidelines and ARPs (e.g. perceived failure to apply these documents) as well as consideration of Community Association comments, which was generally felt to be lacking.

There was considerable discussion on the relative merits of discretion with guidelines vs. firm bylaw rules with less discretion, and a majority indicated that they would prefer the latter if the community and the City could agree on rules, even if less discretion meant less circulation for comment. This direction is consistent with the City’s consultant report referred to above and in the last newsletter. The consultants recommended replacing discretion in some cases with “objective standards”, and suggested embedding elements of the Infill Guidelines or ARPs directly into the Bylaw. City Council has ordered an exploration of objective standards and it might be worthwhile for the City to do pilot projects with willing communities to see if new infill rules can be agreed upon and be successful. A complete list of community comments is available. If you have any thoughts on this please be in touch.

The Infill Guidelines report goes to the LPT committee on June 16. This is a public hearing.

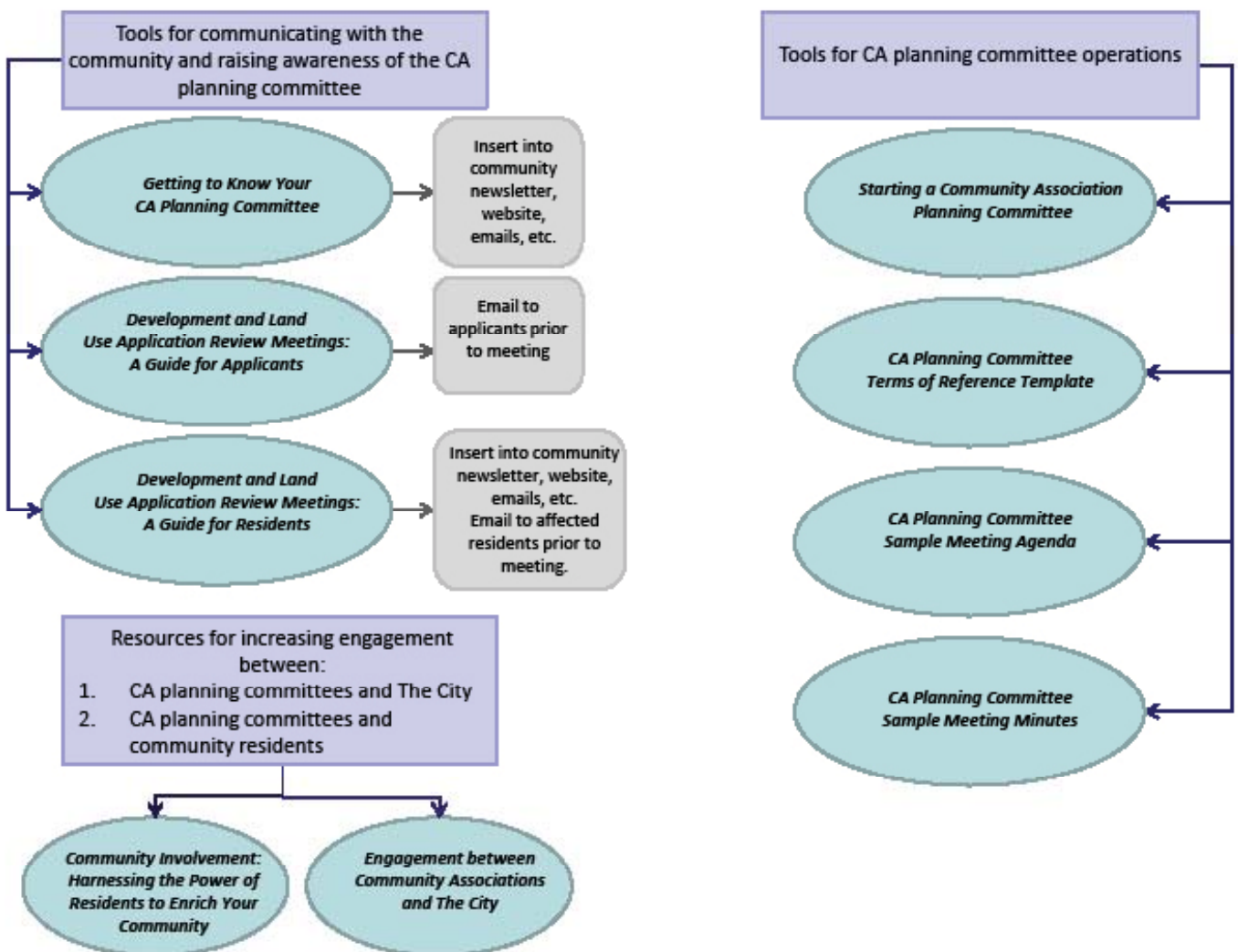
Digital sign update

A number of digital billboard applications that have been refused by planners (e.g. for safety or nuisance reasons) have been approved upon appeal to SDAB, highlighting a hole in the Land Use Bylaw, which does not address digital signs. The planning department attempted to put some rules in place, and about a dozen community reps attended a consultation in late April; there was concern expressed about unrestricted digital signage, but some CAs are also considering digital signs for their own facilities. The attempt to bring in rules prior to the pre-election break foundered at Calgary Planning Commission, which referred it back until December. If this is a concern you should contact your alderman.

The Federation has recently developed some resource materials for community association planning committees focused on citizen engagement. Specifically, these tools and resources are aimed at promoting more effective and representative planning committees, greater citizen involvement in community planning, and proactive, visionary planning exercises.

Please visit the members only of our website to access a number of contacts, resources, and useful documents for community association planning volunteers. If you are having trouble logging in, please email us or phone (403) 244-4111 ext. 202.

Here is an overview of these new tools:



Farewell...

Hi everyone, I just wanted to say how much I've enjoyed working with you all. Even though I am excited to be moving back to Vancouver, I must admit that I am also sad to be leaving such a great group of community associations and people.

I wish you all the best in the future...

-Taryn Hayes