



Update: Implementation of Policy C-327 (Circulation and Notification Standards) Amendments

Electoral Division: All

Project: Policy C-327

Date:	April 23, 2024		
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Department:	Planning		
Approved by:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive Director / Director	and/or	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chief Administrative Officer

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to review the impacts of recent amendments to Policy C-327 (Circulation and Notification Standards), approved by Council on October 17, 2023.

Administration has noted a substantial increase in financial costs to the County resulting from the increased requirements set out within the amended Policy C-327, especially relating to the increased notification area required for development permit applications. Administration has also received correspondence from landowners within the County in relation to the increased circulation and notification areas, which is set out in Attachment D.

Considering the findings of its review, Administration is recommending further amendments to Policy C-327 to improve the effectiveness of development permit notifications. These amendments support Council's original intent of creating a simplified and inclusive circulation and notification process, while reducing notification requirements for a high volume of development permit applications that are of a lesser scale and intensity.

These amendments presented by Administration are proposed with the understanding that forthcoming technological improvements, including the release of an online Planning and Development Map, are anticipated to offer County landowners the ability to customize their notification preferences for applications in their area and to receive email notifications. This potential enhanced service would likely result in the need to undertake a comprehensive review of Policy C-327.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council amend Circulation and Notification Standards Policy C-327 in accordance with Attachment A.

THAT Council directs Administration to prepare and present a report to Council on the following before the end of Q3 2024:

- a. Confirming progress made on implementing a technological solution that provides landowners with opportunities to customize application notification preferences.
- b. Identifying potential options, approaches, and best practices for a comprehensive update to Policy C-327 which may cover the following areas:
 - i. Offering simple and clear application notification areas based on best practice, the scale of development, and local context.
 - ii. Potential replacement of signage requirements with additional requirements for applicant-led engagement measures on larger-scale proposals.

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- iii. Provision of a range of both digital and hard copy methods that support an inclusive and accessible notification process.

BACKGROUND

Council directed Administration to prepare amendments to Policy C-327, providing a standardized circulation and notification area of:

- 1600m (1 mile) for all applications outside of hamlets; and
- 800m (0.5 miles) for all applications within hamlets.

These amendments were approved by Council in October 2023, and it was further directed at that time that Administration bring a report back to Council with a review of the implementation of the amendments by April 30, 2024.

ANALYSIS

Prior to Policy C-327 amendments approved on October 17, 2023, different circulation areas existed depending on the type of planning application (Local Plan, Redesignaton, Subdivision and Road Closure) and development permits. The amendments approved by Council provided a simpler, standardized circulation and notification approach for all planning applications and development permits with the intent to reduce confusion around the circulation and notification process and to ensure that the County is effectively notifying community stakeholders of development proposals.

Although the approved amendments have increased the number of landowners notified for most applications, this has come with a substantial increase in financial costs from postage, materials, printing, and staff resources particularly for development permits. Landowners have also raised concerns over the increased volume of letters being received and the resultant financial costs to the County.

A summary of the estimated additional financial costs for development permits since the October 17, 2023, Policy C-327 amendments is provided below.

Development Permit Notification Timeline	October 31, 2023 – March 19, 2024
Total Number of Development Permits	136
Number of Notification Letters (which would have been sent under the old policy)	10,222
Additional Number of Notification Letters Sent (due to the new policy)	27,923
Additional Postage Cost (\$0.92 per letter)	\$25,689.16
Additional Paper Cost (\$0.04 per letter)	\$1,200.00
Additional Envelope Cost (\$0.14 per letter)	\$3,900.00
Additional Printing Cost (\$0.55 per letter)	\$15,354.20
Additional Staff Time Cost	\$4,500.00
Total Additional Cost	\$50,643.36
Additional Cost Per Permit (Average)	\$372.37
Additional Cost Per Letter	\$1.81

Due to the noted costs to date and future anticipated costs, Administration recommends that certain development permit applications of a lower scale and intensity have reduced notification requirements, as their potential impacts do not appear to warrant landowner circulation beyond the immediate area. Administration recommends a 200m notification radius for these lesser scale uses. A 200m notification

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radius would ensure a consistent notification area while notifying all properties within a reasonable proximity to the proposal.

A summary of the most common development permit uses submitted to the County, which are deemed of lower scale and intensity and have resulted in low levels of community concern, include:

- Accessory Building
- Accessory Dwelling Unit
- Dwelling, Manufactured
- Home-Based Business (Type II)
- Setback Relaxation
- Show Home
- Signage
- Stripping and Grading

Attachment C provides an example of the current and proposed notification area for an accessory dwelling unit development permit notice of decision, which along other uses listed above, is deemed a use of lower scale and intensity, which warrants a reduced notification requirement. Attachment C provides a detailed parcel map showing the amended notification area and resulting costs.

Administration is aware that there are development permit uses of a greater scale and intensity. These uses may have wider traffic, noise, odour or compatibility concerns, which warrant greater landowner notification compared to lower scale and less intense development permit applications. To ensure appropriate landowner notification requirements for these uses, which are listed in the table below, Administration is recommending keeping the current wider notification area set out in Policy C-327.

Application Type	Previous Policy	Current Policy (October 17, 2023 Amendment)	Proposed Amendments	Implications
Development Permit for the below uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Abattoir; ▪ Aggregate Resource Extractive Industry; ▪ Agriculture (Regulated); ▪ Airport; ▪ Business uses outside of the East Balzac and Janet Area Structure Plans; ▪ Cannabis Cultivation; ▪ Cannabis Processing; ▪ Cannabis Retail Store; ▪ Care Facility (Group); ▪ Firing Range; ▪ Kennel; ▪ Manure Storage Facility; ▪ Natural Gas Plan; ▪ Natural Resource Extraction/Processing; 	Lesser of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-lot depth • Up to 800m (1/2 mile) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800m (1/2 mile) when inside a hamlet boundary • 1600m (1 mile) when outside a hamlet boundary 	None	None

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Application Type	Previous Policy	Current Policy (October 17, 2023 Amendment)	Proposed Amendments	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recycling/Compost Facility; ▪ Solar Farm; 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special Function Business; ▪ Vacation Rental; ▪ Waste Management Facility; ▪ Wind Farm; and ▪ Waste Transfer Site. 	Lesser of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-lot depth • Up to 800m (1/2 mile) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800m (1/2 mile) when inside a hamlet boundary • 1600m (1 mile) when outside a hamlet boundary 	None	None
Development Permit for all other uses	Lesser of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-lot depth • Up to 800m (1/2 mile) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800m (1/2 mile) when inside a hamlet boundary • 1600m (1 mile) when outside a hamlet boundary 	200m (1/8 mile)	Decreased notifications for proposals of a lesser intensity or scale.
Local Plan	1600m (1 mile)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800m (1/2 mile) when inside a hamlet boundary • 1600m (1 mile) when outside a hamlet boundary 	None	None
Redesignation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800m (1/2 mile) if within ASP • 1600m (1 mile) if outside ASP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800m (1/2 mile) when inside a hamlet boundary • 1600m (1 mile) when outside a hamlet boundary 	None	None
Road Closure / Subdivision	800m (1/2 mile)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800m (1/2 mile) when inside a hamlet boundary • 1600m (1 mile) when outside a hamlet boundary 	None	None

Online Mapping Project

Administration continues to work on the development of an online Planning and Development Map, which is expected to provide the potential for landowners to customize their notification preferences and also to receive electronic notifications. If successful, this technological solution would provide a significantly enhanced service that would remove many of the obstacles currently observed with planning and development circulations. It would provide an opportunity to reduce circulation costs, increase efficiency and reliability in the delivery of notifications, and most importantly, allow landowners to direct the level at which they wish to participate in the development of the County.

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Administration is still exploring the capabilities of the proposed mapping system and will keep Council informed of progress in delivering the desired features of the system. Upon public release of the online map and circulation tool, it is considered likely that a comprehensive update to Policy C-327 would be required to accommodate the new notification capabilities and revisit the County’s overall approach to notification methods.

COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT

Feedback received from County landowners directly affected by the Policy C-327 amendments approved by Council on October 17, 2023, have been considered as part of the proposed amendments.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

The proposed amendments would reduce the financial and staff cost to the County for development permit applications not required to align with the planning application requirement in Policy C-327. Approximately \$372.37 per application, and an additional approximately \$372.37 per appeal received for similar development permit applications.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Key Performance Indicators			Strategic Alignment
Effective Service Delivery	SD2: Services are resourced and delivered to specific groups as intended, and citizens are satisfied with the outcomes	SD2.1: Percent of citizens satisfied with the range of County services available/delivered	Citizen satisfaction will be improved as the County has responded to concerns about the effective use of County resources, while still ensuring citizens are appropriately informed for all applications.
Effective Service Delivery	SD3: Citizens are satisfied with Public Engagement opportunities and availability of information	SD3.1: Percent of citizens satisfied with the information provided by the County (newspaper, website, social media)	Citizen satisfaction remains a priority for all development permit application notifications, with mailouts still implemented based upon the amended policy with recognition of a larger notification area for more intensive uses.
Effective Service Delivery	SD3: Citizens are satisfied with Public Engagement opportunities and availability of information	SD3.2: Percent of citizens satisfied with the public engagement opportunities provided by the County	Development permit information remains available on the County website and development permits are advertised through the County Connect e-newsletter.
Effective Service Delivery	SD4: Services are continually assessed for improvements in cost efficiency, effectiveness, and customer experience	SD4.1: Percent of services that are assessed annually for innovation opportunities and have demonstrable efficiency improvements	Policy C-327 Amendments were reviewed, landowner concerns responded to, and internal evaluation of increased financial and staffing costs addressed.

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ALTERNATE DIRECTION

Where Council is inclined to continue with the current circulation areas in Policy C-327, Administration recommends that Council may wish to commence a comprehensive update to the Policy exploring more cost-effective ways of providing an inclusive approach to landowner notification. However, noting the ongoing Planning Department Enhancement Strategy and associated technological improvements that are being developed, such an update may be premature and require subsequent revisions and rework.

THAT Council receive the Update: Implementation of Policy C-327 (Circulation and Notification Standards) Amendments report as information.

THAT Council directs Administration to undertake a comprehensive update of Circulation and Notification Standards Policy C-327 with a revised policy presented to Council by the end of Q4 2024. The update shall include the following areas:

- a. Offering simple and clear application notification areas based on best practice, the scale of development, and local context.
- b. Potential replacement of signage requirements with additional requirements for applicant-led engagement measures on larger-scale proposals.
- c. Provision of a range of both digital and hard copy methods that support an inclusive and accessible notification process.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Draft Policy C-327 – Redline Version
- Attachment B: Current Policy C-327
- Attachment C: Development Permit Example
- Attachment D: Landowner Correspondence