Calgary Planning Commission Comments

Administration met with Calgary Planning Commission three times. On 2019 July 4, a workshop was held with Commission to get their feedback. On July 18, Administration returned to provide a summary of what we heard and outline how we proposed to address the issue. On August 15, Administration returned for a second workshop on a revised version of the Guidebook to gain feedback and confirm that we had addressed their comments.

The following table outlines themes and a summary of what we heard in workshop 1, and how Administration proposed to address the issue:

Theme	*What we heard*	*How we addressed the issue*
Guidebook in the planning system	• Document made sense, but had to get deep into the document to understand it. • Be explicit with big shifts.	• Clearly defined the purpose of the Guidebook, how to use it, and how it fits in with other documents in the planning system • Restructured and revamped the introduction section to be clear about the implementation of the Guidebook – who, what, where, why, when, and how, and where in the hierarchy the plan sits
Who, What, Where, Why, When, How	• Wasn't clear on what it was applicable to, how to use the document, and who the intended audience was. • Clarity and concise delivery of messages and information. • Who, what, where, when, and why needs to be answered throughout the document.	• More clearly answered these questions in each section of the Guidebook • Restructured and revamped the document into 4 distinct chapters • Introduced cover sheets and user guides
Document Structure	• Implementation needs to be up front. • Potential to collapse sections together, or move sections to the appendix. • Clarity on how a developer would use the Urban Form Categories.	• Clearly articulated in the introduction how the Guidebook will be implemented, and connect to the Implementation section • Ensured that the structure of the document addresses who/what/where/why/ when/how and the intended user. • Grouped things that are relevant to certain users.
Voice of the Guidebook	• Policies aren't clear, should/shall, and some policies aren't written as policies. • The people centric focus got lost. • Some general policies are dated and cater to lowest common denominator.	• More clear and consistent in which voice is used. • Wove "Maria and David" throughout the document to illustrate outcomes and continue a consistent journey throughout • Improved precision with policies, be clear what is guideline and what is policy. • Improved plain language while ensuring technical precision.

	• Will these policies allow for various outcomes, or create uniformity? • There are risks to using certain terminology. Plain language and be clear with the intended terms.	
Flexibility/ responsiveness of the Urban Form Classification System	• Clarity on use best practices and where various uses fit – big-box retail, institutional uses, parks and open spaces, recreation, civic uses • Clarity on activity level, human experience • Building scale is too coarse and prescriptive, risking maximizing built form everywhere. Unsure how scale relates to floor-area-ratio.	• The system clearly communicates its responsiveness and flexibility to readers and users • Clearer when something is not flexible. • Clearer that the system is not to be creating barriers to development (i.e. range of uses), but to support development outcomes and flexibility. • Acknowledged that scale will continue to be discussed through a renewed LUB and tested through local area planning
Guidebook Implementation	• How does this apply with local area plans that are old and new? • What do the new land use district look like, big shift. • Important to work from the ground up with developing the new districts to see how they connect with the Urban Form Categories. • Concerns with creating non-conforming uses.	• Defined built-out areas and how this will align with Next20, Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan, Off-Site Levy (and other Guidebooks). • Clearer about General Policies and what it could mean to apply it everywhere. • Clearer about how the Land Use Bylaw will be outlined • Created supplementary material to show how to get to an Urban Form Category.

On July 18, Administration returned to Commission and received confirmation that we had accurately captured their comments and agreed with our proposal for addressing their comments. Additional feedback was also provided and is summarized as follows:

Theme	*What we heard*	*How we addressed the issue*
Flexibility/ responsiveness of the Urban Form Classification System	• Building scale is prescriptive, clarity is required on streetwall height, building height is driven by elevator capacity and tall buildings have a tipping point	• Changes to the scale portion of the Guidebook to discuss streetwall and height.
Guidebook Implementation	• Concerns with the Heritage Overlay • Demonstrate how the Urban Form Categories work in a map	• Heritage overlay removed from the Guidebook at this time, and will be considered through separate pieces of work. • Created an appendix to demonstrate how to apply the Urban Form Categories.

On August 15, Commission provided comments on a revised version of the Guidebook, and a summary is provided as follows:

Theme	*What we heard*	*How we addressed the issue*
General	• Document structure has improved. It is more readable and better organized. The document flow is clear. Appreciate the multi-cultural names.	
	• If Chapter 3 is applied to the built-out areas, need to ensure there isn't redundancy or duplication and that it is clear when this document applies versus other policies.	• Ensured there isn't redundancy and that the document is more user friendly with user guides.
	• Implementation and use of this document happens with industry. Need to ensure that there are processes in place to monitor the effectiveness of the document and respond to issues. • Engagement with industry is critical to have them on side.	• Will continue to have thoughtful engagements with industry. We will embark on a system to monitor the quality of our outcomes, evaluate the built form, and develop a data set that will tell us how we are improving. • Industry has been involved in a variety of multi-stakeholder workshops, share back sessions, and meetings. Going forward they will continue to be involved. There is an additional share back session scheduled in September, as well as opportunities for industry to speak at Committee and Council.
	• Need to understand how the taller building forms will work with floor area ratio.	• Provided policies to guide with scale modifiers. Future work on the new land use bylaw districts will provide the detail on floor area ratio.
	• Use versus form – form is a better direction, but people will gravitate to use. Need to consider how use will be handled for permanent/discretionary uses. Be cautious about how blanket-changes to land use affects the market.	• This will be addressed through the new land use bylaw districts, can also look at new processes, application types, and how-to guides.