

What We Heard Report

For more than four years, we have been engaging with communities, citizens, stakeholders, industry, Council, and staff on various planning projects. Administration collated feedback and information from over 75 engagement reports, minutes, documents, and letters dating back to 2015. These projects include the Municipal Development Plan, local area plans, Land Use Bylaw, Main Streets, the Developed Areas Guidebook, Community Representation Framework, Streetscape Master Plans, Partners in Planning, One Calgary, as well as receiving direction from Council and Committee decisions, to name a few.

The data gathered provided information on citizens and stakeholders ideas, values, issues and desired outcomes on planning projects as well as general comments on process and tools. All feedback was themed, filtered, and summarized to identify common threads, vision, issues, and concerns, and is represented by the summary noted within this document. The information collected identified that there is a need for a change in how we plan Great Communities for Everyone.

Summary of key themes and the case for change

Across all engagement there was a strong desire for consistency in planning through applications, processes, engagement, communications, and plain language. Folks asked for there to be improved knowledge of planning documents and for consistency in decision making.

Time and again we heard that we need to improve our documents, tools, and processes to fix the issue. The following five themes were identified across the more than 75 documents we reviewed:

Are we achieving our outcomes?

- City policies need to provide for a clear planning process with clear expectations of communities.
 - The planning process needs to give better consideration for community needs, history, local context, and community character. Communities feel this is being watered down.
 - The City needs to better understand demographics, housing costs, and investments in communities to help plan for change and evolution in communities.
 - Building blocks need to better reflect built form rather than use differences. Built form needs to show how it interfaces with other built form types, and provide guidance to ensure appropriate transitions between various built forms.
 - Some local area plans are out of date and no longer relevant. It might be valuable to stale-date local area plans and use the Guidebook in its place so that all developed areas have relevant local policy that is aligned with the kind of city we are building.

Minor changes aren't resulting in real change

- Citizens desire to live in communities that are inspiring, vibrant, accessible, safe, and reflect the identity of the community. Communities are concerned about the impacts of new development and express concern over development outcomes that aren't being realized despite regular amendments to our tools and policies.
- The planning process needs to give better consideration for community needs, history, local context and community character.

Do we have the right tools for implementation?

- The City needs to have the right tools for implementation
 - Policy language and process needs to be simple and explicit and less subjective.
 - The hierarchy of plans needs to be clear, including how to use the plans.
 - Some policy tools are out of date and no longer relevant. Need to ensure that planning in communities is modernized and responsive to change in the city.
 - The Land Use Bylaw is long and complex. The right tool will be more user-friendly, shorter, and plain language.
 - The City needs to consider financial incentives that are available to support redevelopment within communities.
 - Engagement with communities is critical at all stages of the project with clear timelines and implementation.

There is a disconnect between policy and regulation

- The tools The City uses to create great communities for all (Municipal Development Plan, Guidebook, Local Area Plans, Land Use Bylaw) need to be linked.
 - The Guidebook needs to be clear on the vision and direction. The Guidebook does not provide the right level of guidance, and interpretation of policies is not consistent. It is not clear how the Guidebook implements the Municipal Development Plan, or how the Guidebook connects to the Land Use Bylaw.
 - The Land Use Bylaw needs to be more user-friendly, shorter, and plain language. Rules should align with policies.
 - The existing Land Use Bylaw is not adaptable to changing market conditions, it should be more flexible to allow for it. We need to be able to encourage new opportunities in business, industry, and technology.

We need to focus on what citizens value

- Needs to establish trust in its processes, how feedback is being used, and answer to why some comments aren't being used.
- Overall the content shared and the engagement process for planning need to be more user-friendly.
 - Engagement should be upfront about what is proposed, how communities can participate, and how their feedback is being used.
 - Engagement should be accessible and make it easy to participate through plain language and involvement.
 - Plans need to provide better graphics and imagery to illustrate the policies and rules.
 - Maps need to be legible and clear, more maps if required.
 - Engagement is critical at all stages of the project with clear timelines and implementation.

Engagement overview

A number of engagements were completed in 2019 to inform required changes to the Developed Areas Guidebook (now the Guidebook for Great Communities) and the Land Use Bylaw Framework and Outline for New Districts, including:

- February 2019: Invite-only event with subject matter experts and advocates on the concept of a heritage overlay district to understand how the Guidebook could lay out a framework for heritage policies.
- February 2019: Building Blocks Workshop with invited representatives from industry.
- February 2019: Invite-only engagement with our multi-stakeholder Working Group made up of representatives from Community Associations, the Federation of Calgary Communities, developers, builders, consultants, and heritage advocates to begin the first phase of engagement on the Guidebook
- March 2019: Invite-only engagement with our multi-stakeholder Working Group to help refine planning tools for the Guidebook
- June 2019: Invite-only engagement with our multi-stakeholder Working Group to share back what we heard from stakeholders through our previous engagements in 2019 as well as the summary of over 75 engagement reports dating back to 2015.
- July 2019: Two sessions with Calgary Planning Commission. First session was a workshop and discussion, the second was to follow-up with a report on what we heard and how we plan to address their comments.
- August 2019: A second workshop was held with Calgary Planning Commission to outline how we addressed their comments, and receive additional feedback on the Guidebook and Land Use Bylaw Framework.
- September 2019: Invite-only engagement with our multi-stakeholder Working Group to share back what we heard from stakeholders during circulation of the draft Guidebook, and how we have addressed or responded to their comments.

What we heard summary

Heritage

- Determining boundaries couldn't happen in isolation from other community conversations, such as infrastructure, density/intensity targets and the types of incentives/financing that is or isn't available.
- Generally, the participants discussed various built-form aspects for heritage sites, the impacts of adjacent development and how to address built-form, how to incentivize heritage preservation, how to enforce policies for heritage sites, the use of a potential heritage overlay district, and the need to look at the whole of the community context of historic assets.

Multi-stakeholder Working Group Sessions

Overall feedback was positive and constructive throughout all engagements with the multi-stakeholder Working Group.

- In the February 2019 workshop, the concept of Great Communities for Everyone and the new draft Building Blocks (now called Urban Form Categories) was shared. Stakeholders had the opportunity to utilize the blocks and have table discussions about the tools, what works and does not work, and what gaps may exist. Detailed feedback was provided by participants and discussed at their tables.

- In the March 2019 workshop, a “World Café” style workshop was held with a focus on five topic areas including the next draft of the Building Blocks (now called Urban Form Categories), draft Special Policy Areas, draft Scale and Transition policies, draft implementation policies, and draft common policies. Participants were able to get information on each topic, ask questions, and provide feedback to staff.
- In the June 2019 Share Back Session, staff provided clarity on Great Communities for Everyone, what is going on and why, feedback that we heard through engagements, circulations, and reports to committees and Council, and the big moves we have made. Staff shared details about the planning system change, the new Guidebook structure, Guidebook content and policy, and the next steps for a renewed Land Use Bylaw. Discussions were held on each of the topics, and feedback was provided.
- In the September 2018 Share Back Session, staff provided an update on what we heard from Stakeholders through the circulation of the draft Guidebook and how their comments were addressed or responded to.

General feedback was that there was agreement with the system change and a liking of the human centric approach as well as a stress on developing, and supporting development in these areas.

Participants stressed that:

- All City departments need to be involved, not just Planning and Development
- Carry the system change through the process, all the way to approval
- Ensure common understanding of what is being asked and make the documents user-friendly
- The language is still complicated and needs to be more plain language so that the document is useful to the most people
- Need clarity on next steps
- Clarity on how the Guidebook connects to other policies and regulation

Calgary Planning Commission Workshops

The following table outlines themes and a summary of what we heard, and how we have addressed the issue:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>What we heard</u>	<u>How we propose to address the issue</u>
Guidebook in the planning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document made sense, but had to get deep into the document to understand it. • Be explicit with big shifts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

<p>Who, What, Where, Why, When, How</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Document Structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Voice of the Guidebook</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Flexibility/ responsiveness of the Urban Form Classification System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system is now clearly communicated its responsiveness and flexibility to readers and users • Clarified when something is not flexible. • Clarified 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
<p>Guidebook Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined built-out areas and how this will align with Next20, Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan, Off-Site Levy (and other Guidebooks). • Clarified about built-form, development, and general policies and what it could mean to apply it everywhere. • Clarified how the Land Use Bylaw will be outlined • Created supplementary material to show how to get to an Urban Form Category.