

## Great Communities for Everyone

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Calgary is a city of inspiring neighbourhoods, each on a journey of growth and evolution. As the most livable city in Canada and fifth most livable city in the world, Calgary has a lot to offer both current and future residents. Acknowledging the needs of a changing population, trends in housing preferences and affordability, and the need for economic diversification and investor confidence, Administration is proposing improvements to the current planning system that could add to the resiliency and sustainability of our communities.

This report introduces a shift to a new planning system that focuses on how people experience our city and the built form that influences that experience, rather than focusing on individual buildings and uses. A graphic of the new planning system, alignment of work and timing is contained in Attachment 1. This new system will strive to provide more choices and opportunities, allowing residents of all communities to make informed choices best suited to their individual needs and provide more certainty by defining clear expectations for built form outcomes. This new approach will provide a clear connection between the policies guiding a community's growth and the districts of the Land Use Bylaw.

The first component of this new planning system is the proposed *Guidebook for Great Communities (Guidebook)*. The *Guidebook* provides a consistent approach to local area planning through common planning policies and a plan framework that enables communities to evolve in a manner that responds to the needs of current and future residents. The creation of the *Guidebook* is described in Attachment 2, outlining the premise, reasons behind the development of a new *Guidebook* and how that aligns with the shift to a new planning system. The *Guidebook* itself is contained in Attachment 3.

The framework to align the Land Use Bylaw (Bylaw) with the Municipal Development Plan (Plan) and the *Guidebook* is the second deliverable of the new planning system and is contained in Attachment 4. The framework conceptualizes how new districts and regulations will be integrated into the Bylaw and outlines the main regulatory changes from our current Bylaw anticipated in the future. Further, in conjunction with this report, a subsequent report entitled *Implementing Great Communities for Everyone (PUD2019-1200)* should be considered as it proposes the work plan for implementing the Bylaw framework.

The proposed *Guidebook* represents a major step toward achieving the goals of the Municipal Development Plan and Council's priority on building safe and inspiring neighbourhoods. While this final recommended draft has been informed by numerous conversations with Council, communities and stakeholders over many years, it is a departure in engagement compared to policy initiatives in the past. Administration recognizes the limited public review period for this PUD2019-1015 report prior to committee, and heard from members of Council and stakeholders that more time for review would be appreciated. Committee may, therefore, want to consider postponing this and Report PUD2019-1200 until the 2019 November 06 SPC on Planning & Urban Development Committee to allow stakeholders to become more familiar with the proposals and, in doing so, enable a more well-informed conversation at both Committee and Council.

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### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development:

1. Direct Administration to:
  - a. prepare a bylaw for the *Guidebook for Great Communities* as outlined in Attachment 3; and
  - b. forward the proposed bylaw, to accommodate the required advertising, and this report, directly to the 2019 November 18 Combined meeting of Council.
2. Recommends that Council:
  - a. hold a Public Hearing for the proposed bylaw at the 2019 November 18 Combined meeting of Council, and give three readings to the proposed Bylaw; and
  - b. adopt, by resolution, the Framework for a Renewed Land Use Bylaw and Outline for New Districts, as contained in Attachment 4.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2019 July 3 meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development, it was moved by Councillor Carra, that the Developed Areas Guidebook Update and Implementation Report (PUD2019-0253) due in 2019 Q3 to be moved to 2019 October 2, PUD2019-0866.

At the 2019 June 17 Combined Meeting of Council, moved by Councillor Carra and seconded by Councillor Gondek, with respect to Report PUD2019-0402 (Enabling Successful Infill Development – Options for Changes), the following was adopted:

“That Council hold a Public Hearing for the proposed amending bylaw 46P2019; and

1. Give three readings to the Proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendment 46P2019 in Attachment 1; and
2. Direct Administration to return, through the Developed Areas Guidebook report, with an outline for what new developed area districts could look like and how the 12 issues will be addressed (option 3).”

Additional previous Council direction prior to 2019 June is contained in Attachment 5.

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### **BACKGROUND**

In 2017, the Developed Areas Guidebook (Municipal Development Plan: Volume 2, Part 3) was approved as one of three guidebooks intended to help implement the broad vision of the Municipal Development Plan. The purpose of the guidebooks was to standardize and simplify planning processes, consolidate common policies to achieve consistency, and facilitating efficiency in the local area planning process by providing a framework of building blocks to be used consistently in local area planning work, allowing the local area plan process to focus on area-specific policies that are unique to communities.

Since adoption in 2017, Administration has been working on revisions to the Developed Areas Guidebook to address outstanding concerns, such as missing or confusing building blocks and gaps in certain policy topics. At the same time, many discussions were being had around issues with existing districts and rules in the Land Use Bylaw, implying that there was a gap between policy and implementation. Addressing the Developed Areas Guidebook and Bylaw separately only created further disparity between the documents, resulting in consistent requests for updates, while not addressing the systemic, underlying issues.

Upon further review of the Developed Areas Guidebook and based on feedback received from several different engagements (both on this document as well as other ongoing planning initiatives), it became clear that revisions to the existing Developed Areas Guidebook were not the best way to address outstanding concerns.

Through both the Developed Areas Guidebook and Land Use Bylaw projects, it was determined that before Administration would be able to address the issues within the individual tools, a new planning system was needed. Instead of continually updating existing tools, it's about providing new tools that allow conversations with communities regarding planning to be different; focused on people's experiences and on achieving great community outcomes.

In coordination with several other planning and policy initiatives (outlined in Attachment 1), Administration will collaborate to leverage engagement opportunities and provide an iterative feedback loop. This will allow for the *Guidebook* to be a living document, responding to lessons learned and future trends.

### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

This section outlines the investigation of the system change, details around the new *Guidebook* and information on the new Bylaw framework.

#### **1. Planning System Change**

Administration has identified the need for a new planning system that will help people to understand why decisions are made and the value of those decisions as they relate to the broader vision for a community. The following principles guide the approach for a new planning system:

- i. Local area plan policy and Bylaw regulation should focus on elements designed to achieve better community-wide outcomes rather than on preventing undesired consequences site-by-site.
- ii. Planning dialogues should create a strong connection between city-wide growth objectives and community aspirations.

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- iii. The regulations that support and guide development should effectively implement city-wide objectives through local policy.
- iv. People should be able to understand why policies and decisions are made and how their community's evolution supports growth and change for the entire city.
- v. Gaps between policy objectives and implementation tools should be resolved.

### 2. The Guidebook

As the first step in a new system, the *Guidebook* supports outcome-focused conversations about the evolution of communities at the local area planning stage and sets the foundation for new Bylaw regulations. The *Guidebook* provides a framework for how to have these conversations about the evolution of communities through local area planning in a way that supports the activities of the people who are there today and those who will be there in the future. More details about the process of creating the *Guidebook* and summary of key shifts from the existing Developed Areas Guidebook to the *Guidebook for Great Communities* is contained in Attachment 2.

#### *Urban Form Classification System*

The *Guidebook* proposes an urban form classification system that describes elements of a community and how they connect to each other. Using this system, areas of a community are categorized by identifying their purpose, general function and activity level, based on an understanding of how these parts relate to and support each other.

#### *Application of the Guidebook*

The *Guidebook* provides consistent common policies to guide local area plans and development throughout the built-out areas of the city (except Centre City). The policies in Chapter 2 of the *Guidebook* establish a common framework and will apply when a new local area plan is adopted. The policies in Chapter 3 apply to all development applications in the built-out areas, regardless of whether the area has a local area plan based on the *Guidebook* or not. This approach will help to eliminate confusion, provide transparency and consistency, and will allow local area plans to focus on the truly unique aspects of the community rather than repeating sound planning policy that applies broadly. Having consistent common policies across Calgary's communities will enhance certainty for landowners and foster desired investment.

### 3. Framework for a Renewed Land Use Bylaw

Proper implementation of the urban form categories and common policies through development requires a reconsideration of our Land Use Bylaw. The framework for Bylaw renewal (Attachment 4) demonstrates alignment with the urban form categories in the *Guidebook* by pairing each category (or grouping of categories) with matching Bylaw districts to enhance consistency. Consistency between policy and regulation will increase certainty regarding expectations that enhances stakeholder confidence in the planning process.

The renewed Bylaw will promote a built form and public realm that prioritizes peoples' experiences with less focus on building uses. This focus will enable better built form and development outcomes, resulting in what is known as a hybrid code, which should help simplify the Bylaw, create flexibility and more clearly define desirable development outcomes. More information regarding this hybrid approach can be found in Attachment 6, including an overview

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of what hybrid codes are, how they work, why they are effective and which other municipalities have created them.

Parking requirements are one example of how the current Bylaw creates barriers to development outcomes, limits opportunities for economic activity and limits the design of new buildings. Currently, parking requirements are specific to each district and are often different for similar uses in similar locations. These requirements also assume similar parking needs without adequate consideration of other transportation options and the location within the city. The new planning approach will take a more strategic and comprehensive approach to evaluating actual parking needs based on the location and amenities surrounding a development and better balance these against other priorities.

### **Implementation – Maintaining the Current Developed Areas Guidebook**

There is a need for the existing Developed Areas Guidebook to remain in effect for previously approved local area plans that already reference it. To respect the outcomes of these community planning initiatives, the Developed Areas Guidebook will remain in effect for these areas despite the introduction of the new *Guidebook*.

Good design principles for streets, buildings and public spaces should be the same regardless of location. To be able to provide consistent guidance throughout Calgary, Administration's long-term plan is to consolidate all guidebooks contained in Volume 2 of the Municipal Development Plan (Developed Areas, New Community, Centre City) into one city-wide guidebook. Until that work is complete, Administration is proposing to allow the policies of the *Guidebook for Great Communities* to be considered in all planning initiatives, in addition to any locally-applicable guidebook.

### **Calgary Planning Commission Review**

On 2019 July 4, Administration met with members of Calgary Planning Commission for a workshop on the *Guidebook* and Bylaw framework. The workshop was productive, highlighting six key themes for further refinement. On 2019 July 18, Administration returned to Commission outlining the six themes, along with the next steps Administration would be taking to address these issues. On 2019 August 15, Administration went back to Commission with an updated draft of the *Guidebook* and Bylaw framework to gather Commission's feedback on these documents. Commission made positive comments and acknowledged the significant work that Administration had done in the month between meetings. For more details on the items discussed, please see Attachment 7.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

The body of work presented in this report has been informed by conversations with Council, communities, the development and building industry and other stakeholders over many years. Since the adoption of the Plan and the Land Use Bylaw, more than 75 engagement sessions have occurred on various topics. In addition, there have been hundreds of public hearings of Council on planning matters that have helped show communities' perspectives and concerns, as well as Council direction. While individually all of these sessions make a strong argument for a review of the current planning tools, together, they suggest that a review of the planning system is needed to ensure outcomes can be achieved. Attachment 8 contains a detailed What We Heard Report from past and current engagement.

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The *Guidebook* and the Bylaw framework presented in this report represent the culmination of content-specific engagement sessions with various key stakeholders. Engagement has also occurred with the North Hill Communities Local Growth Planning pilot project to inform the work to date. Further refinement on the *Guidebook* and the Bylaw will continue through feedback received during ongoing multi-community planning activities. The *Guidebook* is intended to be a living document and will be updated based on further engagement on these other policy projects and the renewed Bylaw.

A letter of support was received from the Calgary Heritage Authority and is contained in Attachment 9.

### **Strategic Alignment**

The new *Guidebook* and the framework for a renewed Bylaw presented in this report are part of a systematic change to The City's approach to planning, focused on advancing the Municipal Development Plan. This body of work delivers on two initiatives identified as part of the City Planning and Policy Service priority work program and is inter-related to several other policy initiatives currently underway. It takes action toward Council's goal of creating a city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods. It also delivers modern planning tools that provide certainty and clarity to communities and landowners with the goal of enabling desired development and promoting business activity.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

This body of work will offer more choices and opportunities, helping residents stay in communities where they have connections to people and services, accommodating different demographics, affordability ranges and multiple generations. Building on the infrastructure and existing services already in our built-out areas, the evolution of these areas will be assisted by clear guidance and understanding of how development will contribute to these objectives and ultimately create a city of great communities. This body of work will also help to increase development certainty and built form outcomes, reducing time required for applications and fewer site-specific applications for redesignations.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### ***Current and Future Operating Budget:***

There are no impacts to the current and future operating budget as a result of this report.

#### ***Current and Future Capital Budget:***

There are no impacts to the current and future capital budget as a result of this report.

### **Risk Assessment**

There are a number of risks that have been identified through this work, including: the shift in the way engagement has been completed, the fact that the value of community evolution and change isn't well understood, change management needs (internally and externally) and implementation risks. While Attachment 10 contains a more fulsome discussion of all the

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identified risks, there are a couple of risks associated with the recommendations of the report that are detailed in this section.

Timelines have been a concern for both industry and communities, with the expectation that engagement on the *Guidebook* would be longer if Administration had followed a traditional approach. In order to deliver on priority initiatives identified in the City Planning and Policy workplan, Administration has, through this project, attempted to engage stakeholders differently, knowing that the time projects have taken historically to engage are not feasible moving forward in order to allow other planning initiatives to proceed. Ultimately, implementation of the Municipal Development Plan and the Guidebook itself is through local area planning and it is important to provide a foundation for that planning work to continue, recognizing there will be future opportunities to make revisions as lessons are learned through that local area planning.

Further, it is important to note that a fulsome engagement process was not completed regarding the application of Chapter 3 of the *Guidebook* in all built-out communities. Administration will work with both front line and permitting staff to provide information to customers ahead of, and during, application review to mitigate any concerns. Administration will also incorporate education and awareness on the *Guidebook* into future work on the renewed land use bylaw to provide a foundation for informed conversations resulting in more fulsome engagement leading into any future updates.

### **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

With a fluctuating economy, increased reluctance towards change, and shifting demographics, it is more important than ever for The City to be proactive, inclusive and bold. While this report presents a significant change to the planning system, it accommodates an outcome that is the focus of all of Calgary's communities - *making life better everyday* for the people within our city. This new system, along with the *Guidebook for Great Communities*, and the framework for the Bylaw, focuses on the experiences people have in the places they love.

Administration recommends adoption of the recommendations in this report to establish a new approach to planning communities. This new approach will focus on people and places and ensuring the city can accommodate the needs of residents and visitors today and the needs of future generations.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Attachment 1 – Next Generation Planning System
2. Attachment 2 – Guidebook for Great Communities - Backgrounder
3. Attachment 3 – Guidebook for Great Communities
4. Attachment 4 – A Framework for a Renewed Land Use Bylaw and Outline for New Districts
5. Attachment 5 – Additional Previous Council Direction
6. Attachment 6 – Hybrid Codes
7. Attachment 7 – Calgary Planning Commission Comments
8. Attachment 8 – What We Heard Report
9. Attachment 9 – Letter of Support
10. Attachment 10 – Risk Assessment
11. Attachment 11 – Public Submissions
12. Attachment 12 – Additional Information on Guidebook