

Panel Response to Council Request for Additional Information on the Guidebook for Great Communities

This document has been submitted to City Clerks on behalf of members of a panel of stakeholders to summarize issues that have been identified with the proposed Guidebook for Great Communities. Through ongoing discussions, stakeholders and Administration have achieved a common understanding and approach to several of the issues identified. This document summarizes both the areas of agreement, and also the areas where the panel has identified options for how to proceed. This document is meant to support the materials presented for the report entitled “Great Communities for Everyone” (PUD2019-1015) at the 2019 November 6 SPC on Planning and Urban Development.

Purpose of the Guidebook

The Guidebook for Great Communities (Guidebook) represents a game-changing first document in a new planning system that focuses on how people experience their communities, how we support life and activity in our communities through growth, evolution and change, and how new development supports great communities for everyone. The Guidebook provides people and communities with tools to plan in way moves the City and Council towards long-standing objectives. The Guidebook is a policy document that supports the Municipal Development Plan and is the foundation for a renewed Land Use Bylaw.

Request from 2019 October 2

At the 2019 October 2 Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development, committee postponed two reports (Great Communities for Everyone PUD2019-1015 and Implementing Great Communities for Everyone PUD2019-1200) with a request to create a panel comprised of up to 6 stakeholder representatives who collaborated on the Guidebook. Committee requested that the panel work to confirm expectations of the Guidebook, discuss any outstanding areas of disagreement, and propose possible testing methods moving forward.

Representation on the Panel

Through discussions with stakeholders, a panel was formed consisting of the following representatives:

Bev Jarvis – BILD Calgary Region

James Scott – Calgary Planning Commission

Leslie Evans – Federation of Calgary Communities

David White – Member of Industry

Nathan Hawryluk – North Hill Local Growth Plan Member

Lisa Kahn – Legislation & Land Use Bylaw, Calgary Growth Strategies, City of Calgary

Stakeholder Discussions since 2019 October 2

Over the past month, Administration and stakeholders have met to discuss concerns and highlight areas of alignment regarding the Guidebook. Discussions resulted in topics of common understanding and identified areas of outstanding concern.

Common Understanding

The following are issues that have a common understanding of go-forward strategies:

1. Testing and Amendments

Stakeholders expressed concern that the policies in the Guidebook require further testing, specifically through the North Hill local area plan process. Further, there were concerns around whether future updates would be considered and how. In response to these concerns, the following was clarified:

- Administration agrees that this document must be a living document and must be tested with future local area planning process (multi-community plans), and applications to ensure there are no issues with achieving the intent of the Guidebook and the objectives of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP).

The panel recommends:

- Administration should assist on any application issues to ensure swift resolution.
- Testing the built-form policies of Chapter 3 by using new and current applications. Willing applicants could test new applications or recently approved applications with members of industry or through workshops with Calgary Planning Commission.
- Testing the scale and urban form categories through local area plans, addressing community concerns and market considerations.
- Returning to Council with amendments through the reporting of related planning projects closely (see Attachment 1 of the Implementing Great Communities for Everyone report).

Administration is committed to:

- Working with a “sustainment group” to uphold the intent of the Guidebook, ensure the demonstrated linkages to local area plans, interpret appropriate integration with land use designations and districts, and support the transition to the new urban form districts in progress.

2. Outreach and Engagement

Stakeholders expressed concern that there hadn’t been enough engagement and outreach on the content of the document, and that the majority of engagement was information sharing. In response to these concerns, the following was clarified:

- A full communication and engagement plan is being prepared for the next phase of outreach and engagement. Administration is committed to the following principles for future opportunities:
 - To engage with other projects and initiatives (i.e. local area planning processes, Established Areas Growth and Change strategy, Partners in Planning).
 - To provide a range of outreach and engagement through in-depth discussions (i.e. industry and professionals, communities in a local area plan process), and broader outreach and education to communities, citizens, and industry.
 - A strategic approach to engagement and outreach by combining multiple projects/tools at one event, allowing for feedback and information collected for multiple purposes, thereby reducing stakeholder fatigue and making effective use of limited City resources.
 - Consideration will be given to setting stakeholder expectations on engagement and outreach in advance, identifying where there are opportunities to provide input and where engagement is intended to inform or update.
 - Connection with on-going testing through local area plans and applications.

3. Cross-corporate Approach

Stakeholders expressed a desire to ensure that this work is linked to other projects and reports that have impacts on the success of the Guidebook. Administration is committed to:

- Working through existing overlaps between existing Guidebooks (New Communities, Developed Areas, and Centre City), identifying opportunities to ensure future integration.
- On-going collaboration with related projects (i.e. Established Areas Growth and Change Strategy, Heritage, etc).

Outstanding Concerns & Possible Options

The following are identified issues that have different and viable resolution options for achieving Great Communities for Everyone:

1. Timing of Adoption

Stakeholders expressed concern around the timing of Council adoption for the Guidebook for Great Communities. The panel has identified three options for when the Guidebook for Great Communities could be adopted. Each has risks and benefits:

Option 1: December 16, 2019 Public Hearing of Council (Administration recommendation)

- Statutory document provides authority to move forward with local area plans while still committed to testing mentioned above and report-backs through other project reports.
- Allows administration to plan for future phases with more certainty.
- Raises concern that this early adoption would be premature given the likelihood that the Guidebook will be revised (the extent of revisions is unknown) in order to support and integrate into the North Hill local area plan.
- This will increase risk of policy 'version control', which is already a concern with the current Developed Areas Guidebook that is applied in local area plans and main streets. Ensuring the first version of the approved Guidebook policy is appropriately linked and in alignment with upcoming local area plans would mitigate that risk.

Option 2: In combination with the North Hill local area plan

- Allows stakeholders to have more time with the document, opportunity for more awareness, and be part of the testing (through local area plans and applications) before adoption. There is also further opportunity for demonstrating linkages between the Guidebook and local area plans in the context of the new planning system (future "Calgary Code"), and clarify the role of the Guidebook in that system.
- Opportunity to review plain language and defined terms.
- Could reduce version control risk.
- Makes transitioning in-flight local area plans difficult without having the Guidebook approved and could lead to a delay (includes Inglewood/Ramsay, Millican-Ogden, South Hill, and Chinook, all currently scheduled for Q2/Q3 2020).

Option 3: Non-statutory document until Q4, 2020 to allow for more testing

- Builds trust by having more stakeholders to be engaged with and use the document prior to its official adoption in Q4 2020.
- Allows for the development of a formal procedure to amend the Guidebook.
- Allows time for related tools to be formalized through related projects.
- Delays all local area plans in progress to the end of 2020, as well as future work on local area plans.

2. Application of Chapter 3 of the Guidebook

Stakeholders expressed concern around how Chapter 3 (the built-form and common policies) is applied to communities. Chapter 3 provides development application policy (how a building looks), and doesn't change the land use on the ground (i.e. doesn't provide more opportunity than what already exists).

The panel has identified three options for how to apply the built-form and common policies of Chapter 3. Each has risks and benefits:

Option 1: Applied to all built-out communities once the Guidebook is approved (Administration recommendation)

- Equal application of best practices/sound planning principles to all communities.
- Consistency on principles and built-form outcomes.
- More immediate progress city-wide towards envisioned development outcomes.
- Minimal education/outreach has been done thus far.
- Allows for testing through internal workshops on applications and Calgary Planning Commission workshops.

Option 2: Applied to communities only as they go through a local area plan process

- Allows for education/outreach prior to application.
- Ensures that built-form outcomes are applied in areas that have a future growth plan.
- Provides a greater opportunity for testing with a larger sample size in a broader range of communities.
- Does not provide a consistent approach across all communities to achieving built-form outcomes.

Option 3: Applied to any community without an existing statutory plan (local area plan), as well as to communities going through a new local area plan process.

- Allows for communities without existing plans to have a new plan with updated policies.
- Ensures that built-form outcomes are applied in areas that have a future growth plan.
- Does not erode trust with communities that have existing statutory plans.
- Allows existing policies in dated local area plans that do not conform to best practice or city-wide objectives to persist.
- Other related projects may be further along (heritage/bonusing/funding and financing) and compliment the Guidebook.