

November 1, 2019

Development Committee
University Heights Community Association
c/o 3427 Utah Drive N.W.
Calgary, AB T2N 4A8

Attention: Councillor Druh Farrell

**RE: Draft Guidebook for Great Communities ("The Guidebook")
November 6th Meeting of SPC on Planning & Urban Development**

Dear Councillor Farrell:

The University Heights Community Association Development Committee supports the goal of simplifying the planning process in order to better enable future growth and development. In principle, we are aligned with the need to develop long-term plans for areas that support growth with infrastructure and amenities, and believe there is much to be gained through increased efficiencies in infrastructure and transportation. The team working on the Guidebook for Great Communities is to be commended for their effort.

Our Development Committee, however, wishes to ask members of the SPC for Planning and Urban Development to **DELAY approval** of the Guidebook to allow for:

- (1) building awareness among residents of Calgary about the changes being proposed, and
- (2) allowing residents to partake in effective engagement sessions.

1. Need for Awareness

The Guidebook has not been properly disseminated to Planning Committees, Community Associations (CAs) and the residents of Calgary. There have been no tools for communication provided to Community Associations to bring awareness to residents, let alone get their buy-in. With secondary suite reform, 170,000 households occupying R-1 or R-C1 properties were notified by the City. Why has there not been similar communication to households about the upcoming proposed changes?

The lack of awareness is evident in four primary ways:

- 1) Not all Planning Committees (out of more than 150 CAs) were aware of the changes being proposed to Calgary's planning system under the banner of the Developed Areas Guidebook (DAG) since there were no direct mailouts to all CAs;
- 2) The revisions for the DAG were kept confidential over the summer months. Other Chairs of Planning who requested to see drafts of the DAG were refused access;
- 3) The DAG at some point morphed into the Guidebook for Great Communities, released August 30, 2019. It was only on June 17, 2019 that:
"Council directed Administration to return with an outline for what new land use bylaw districts could look like based on the new Guidebook, to return at the same time that the Guidebook is being proposed by Council."
The key phrase is "based on the new Guidebook": Even active participants in the past DAG engagements may not have realized that there was a new Guidebook;
- 4) When the Guidebook was released, members of Planning Committees expected a revised version of the DAG, but instead they learned of a Policy Document that would become Statutory

if approved by Council. Furthermore, the Guidebook will provide the foundation for revisions to the Land Use Bylaw framework.

2. Need for Effective Engagement

The City of Calgary's Engage Policy is meant to enable: *"Purposeful dialogue between The City and citizens and stakeholders to gather information to influence decision making."*

Community Associations have only recently (if at all) been made aware of the new Guidebook. There are significant **changes in scope** with the new Guidebook, specifically to the recent Communities Local Growth Planning Projects, and the fact that it will serve as the foundation of a revised Land Use Bylaw framework. Considering the impact of this document, it would be beneficial for Administration and Council to give the public the opportunity to provide feedback on the latest version of the document prior to going to a Public Hearing.

We would request high quality engagement sessions that address the fundamental application of the Guidebook in the following four ways:

- 1) "Working sessions" should be held in communities over the next year, applying policy tools in the Guidebook. To date, engagement sessions have been "aspirational" (i.e., "What do you want for your community?"), not hands-on, working with proposed policies;
- 2) Engagement opportunities should be advertised and made accessible to a broader audience. Many people were uninformed about engagement sessions or left sessions with unanswered questions. Even CAs are struggling to understand the contents of the Guidebook;
- 3) Communication tools should be provided to Planning Committees to educate residents. Instead, in a limited time frame with limited resources, CAs are struggling to both learn about the Guidebook and communicate the information to their residents. Much of the existing document uses planning jargon that residents may likely not understand clearly;
- 4) The public should be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the new Guidebook. Since **the new Guidebook was only released August 30, 2019**, there has not been opportunity for residents to read, learn and understand it.

To ensure awareness and understanding of the Guidebook, we respectfully suggest that Councillors direct Administration to take more time to reach out to Planning Committees, Community Associations and the residents of Calgary. *This Guidebook announces major changes to community planning and as such it requires effective community awareness and engagement.*

Thank you.

Sincerely,



David Richardson

Chair of the University Heights Community Association Development Committee

Cc: Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development
Peter Khu, President, University Heights Community Association

