



Memo

November 18, 2019

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Stuart Dalglish

Re: Administrative Inquiry - Planning

This memo responds to the 2019 September 09 inquiry submitted by Councillor Farkas. The inquiry is two-fold:

1. How many planners are on staff at the City of Calgary?
2. What are valid planning principles for Council members to consider as part of land use changes?

How many planners are on staff at the City of Calgary?

To answer this, we must first describe who we consider a “Planner” for the purpose of this inquiry. Planners are planning professionals engaged in city planning, which primarily entails land use and urban development planning. Examples of this planning work include developing and implementing the City’s Municipal Development Plan, its strategic growth plans, off-site levies, the land use bylaw, local community plans, main streets planning, and other policies such as the Downtown Strategy, flood mitigation, urban design guidelines, heritage planning, and policies for safe development along freight rail lines. It also includes planners and technicians who work with citizens and customers on their land use and subdivision applications, development permits and new community/outline plans. Not included in this definition are the transportation planners, parks planners, transit planners, communication planners, web planners and business planners that may contribute to various service lines.

There are 170 planners who are engaged in the city planning activities mentioned above in two service lines: The City Planning and Policy Service Line and the Development Approvals Service Line.

- The City Planning and Policy Service Line includes planners in Calgary Growth Strategies and Urban Strategy who work with stakeholders and communities to deliver citywide policies and strategies, including growth strategy. It also includes planners in Community Planning who deliver Area Structure Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans. For 2019, there are six priority areas, comprising over 60 initiatives, being delivered by this service line.
- The Development Approvals Service Line includes planners in Community Planning, and planners in Calgary Approvals Coordination who work with customers on land use redesignations, outline plans, subdivisions and development permits. This work ensures development proposals align with The City’s long-term plans, Council policies and community needs.

Together, these service lines, with Council direction, guide our City’s future development, and enable private investment in Calgary that represents considerable development and construction value for our city.

What are valid planning principles for Council members to consider as part of land use changes?

Council's considerations must be based on sound planning principles and the merits of the proposed land use amendment in the context of the Municipal Development Plan, Council-approved policies & strategies and Council's priorities.

Council should consider whether the proposal is appropriate in terms of its local context, i.e. is it suitable for the site in terms of MDP vision, community plan, and adjoining development (e.g. type of use and its intensity and scale). Furthermore, Council should consider whether the appropriate infrastructure and services can be provided; in other words, is The City able to provide City services such as roads, utilities, transit, recreation, and emergency services to the site.

As per the Municipal Government Act, Council must not base its decisions on non-planning considerations, such as who the user is (e.g. renter or owner), potential loss of privacy, competition between businesses, money and time already committed to the application or assumed impacts on the property value of adjacent properties.

Should you have any further questions on this topic, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Stuart Dalglish
General Manager, Planning & Development