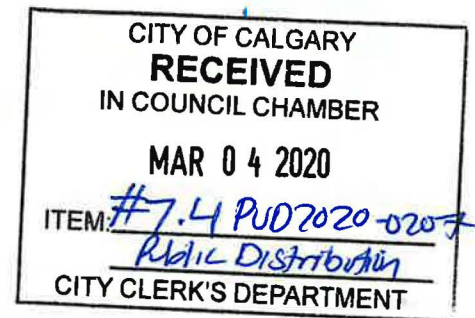




March 4th, 2020

Planning and Urban Development Committee



Re: The Guidebook for Great Communities

The Federation of Calgary Communities (the Federation) is the support organization for over 230 community based non-profit organizations, including 152 community associations. We assist community volunteers in navigating Calgary's planning process and advocate for a community perspective throughout our work. As such, we thank the Guidebook team for the work they have done in moving our City closer to having an implementation plan for the Municipal Development Plan (MDP).

Since the November 4 PUD meeting, the Federation in partnership with the City, have organized four Guidebook 101 sessions (one session was streamed online) and one Planning Exchange. Almost 200 people from approximately 65 Community associations attended the sessions.

The Guidebook is visionary; focused on what the planning will look like for many decades to come, and it will implement some of the vision and goals outlined in the Municipal Development Plan (MDP). We like that the Guidebook will potentially create diverse housing options and move us to more complete communities. We are encouraged by the people-centered approach and look forward to a renewed relationship with community associations and residents as key contributors to the City's growth and change. Further, there are some good urban design policies such as active frontages and human scale development which encourage a more walkable city.

While the Guidebook is a step-forward, there are still some missing tools and policies that we believe should be in the Guidebook since it will be a statutory document and the foundation of the new multi-community local area plans.

Heritage Resources

There are currently no tools in the Guidebook that will protect heritage sites and areas. Many of our communities have heritage sites, areas and cultural landscapes that should be protected. We understand the "Heritage Conservations Tools and Incentives" will be coming to PUD in April, and administration will be looking for Council's direction after the report. Given there is no current timeframe for the tools and incentives, what happens to heritage resources in the interim, especially heritage assets and areas that may not be designated and are not on the inventory list? One of the results of going through the multi-community plan process will be increased flexibility for development across the City. On the other hand, one of the ways to preserve heritage assets are incentives such as density bonusing and transfer, increased flexibility on site etc. Will densifying neighbourhoods reduce the potential use of density bonusing and transfers as a tool for the preservation of heritage?

Once the heritage tools, incentives and policies are completed, how will the policies be included in the Guidebook and will there be potential impacts for those districts that will have already completed their new Local Area Plans? Heritage is very important to a lot of our communities and we need to ensure that adequate policies to protect them are included in the Guidebook.



Funding Growth and Amenities

The Guidebook encourages amenities such as mobility infrastructure, streetscape improvements, community gathering spaces, heritage resources etc. for communities. Goal #4 of the Guidebook says, “promote varied and inclusive spaces and facilities for recreation, play and outdoor activities close by”. Like the future integration of the Heritage work, we understand that the Established Areas Growth and Change Strategy (EAGCS) project team will be presenting Phase 1 of the report to the Priorities and Finance Committee in May and the policies and tools will be incorporated in the Guidebook.

If communities are asked to identify an “Asset Map and List” and priorities for funding as they go through the multi-community process, then there needs to be funding and investment related to the density. Communities that are accepting more intensity need clarity on what triggers investment and once they get to that point, communities need certainty that their amenities and public realm improvements will be funded to support and match the population growth proposed.

Trees and Landscaping

Trees, plants and green landscaping are an important part of our physical and built environment. They play a crucial role in environmental quality and contribute to livability and community character. This is not limited to solely vegetation on public land but includes private land. With redevelopment, there will be a loss of mature trees and vegetation as we accommodate more units on lots.

According to the Next20 State of the City report, “the increase in trees through City programs and private provision is not enough to meet the 14 to 20 per cent tree canopy goal....Achieving this goal will require investment and policy to support urban forestry and other environmental policies”. As the implementation tool of the MDP, the Guidebook should have stronger policies for tree retention and policies to protect mature trees in established communities for us to reach the targets set in the updated MDP.

We also recommend that tree retention and green landscaping incentives outlined with the “Enabling Successful Infill Development” be incorporated into the Guidebook. This would reduce the hard landscaping that could come with increased density or increased redevelopment flexibility. Reducing hard landscaping would also work toward the MDP Core Indicator of Watershed health, measured by the percentage of city area covered by impervious surfaces.

Policy Interpretation

One of the purposes of the Guidebook is to “provide a consistent system that supports local area planning”. In order to provide this consistent system, the interpretation of policy needs to be consistent as well. The Guidebook allows for flexibility, as every multi-community area is different, how do we ensure the various stakeholders (community, developers, City planners) review and interpret the policies the same way so we can have consistency across the different communities in the City? Administration is recommending that chapter 3 of the Guidebook will be a statutory document only when a local area plan has been created using the Guidebook but on the other hand administration,



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through recommendation 2b, also wants direction “to use the policies of chapter 3 of the Guidebook for Great Communities throughout the built-out areas as guidelines when reviewing development permits”. This is confusing to our communities. One of the changes that was made since November, was that the Guidebook will only apply to new multi-community plans.

Other Concerns

Our communities are concerned with the new Low-Density District work that will be commencing soon. Will RC-1 and RC-2 communities continue to exist amongst RC-G? Will they have a place in the future? We know that this is not Guidebook specific, but this is the biggest concern voiced to us by our members and individual residents.

Engagement and Future Plans

There are several planning projects that are currently under way or will be commencing soon like the Multi-Community Plans, Municipal Development Plan review, Established Areas Growth and Change Strategy, and the new Land Use Bylaw to name a few. We are asking for robust engagement, including input sessions, as we undertake some of these planning projects that will ultimately change the way our City grows and change. We also ask for a suitable and time-sensitive delivery of plain-language communications toolkits that will help community associations further engage with residents. We will also encourage administration to continue with training and support for community volunteers to help with interpretation and implementation of the Guidebook.

We understand that you will hear many perspectives today, some of which might give rise to you to make recommendations. At this stage, if minor changes to the Guidebook are required then we suggest recommendations be referred to staff and the sustainment team. If there are extensive changes arising on the floor, then perhaps more time is needed for further review before approval.

Thank you for your consideration.

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