

UPDATE ON URBAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 2017 June 26, Council referred Report PUD2017-0528 back to Administration for further discussion with stakeholders and industry with specific reference to concerns raised in a joint letter received 2017 June 22 from BILD Calgary Region and NAIOP Commercial Real Estate Development Association. Council directed that Administration incorporate any amendments which arise from these discussions into the Urban Design Review Panel Terms of Reference, the Urban Design Review Protocol, and the Implementation Plan, and return the revised documents to the 2017 July 21 Regular Meeting of the SPC on Planning and Urban Development Committee. The project Working Group, including new representation from NAIOP, carried out further stakeholder engagement to review and resolve the concerns expressed in the June 22 letter, resulting in a number of revisions to the three documents. A summary of the revisions is attached. These changes were circulated to the Stakeholder Group as well as to the membership of BILD Calgary Region and NAIOP, who have indicated their support for the clarifications and for the overall project intent, and their willingness to participate in monitoring and measuring the success of the new process.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Planning & Urban Development recommend that Council:

1. Approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Urban Design Review Panel;
2. Receive the revised Urban Design Review Protocol and revised Implementation Plan for information; and
3. Direct Administration to evaluate expanding the Urban Design Review Panel's mandate to include Outline Plans, and report back in a future monitoring report through the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development no later than Q1 2019.

And further, that this Report be forwarded to the 2017 July 24 meeting of Council as an item of Urgent Business.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2017 JULY 21:

That Council:

1. Approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Urban Design Review Panel;
2. Receive the revised Urban Design Review Protocol and revised Implementation Plan for information; and
3. **That Council direct Administration to bring back a Report, through the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development, that identifies and evaluates what, if any, design gaps currently exist in new outline plans, and determine, in conjunction with the development industry and stakeholders, how best to address that gap, and redundancies that may exist among the organizational bodies involved in the review process, no later than 2019 Q1.**

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Excerpts from the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the SPC on Planning and Urban Development, Held 2017 July 21:

“And further, that the **Revised** Report be forwarded to the 2017 July 24 meeting of Council as an item of Urgent Business.”

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2017 June 26, Council directed “that Report PUD2017-0528 and all relevant materials, be referred to Administration for further discussion with stakeholders and industry to review these amendments and return to 2017 July 21 Regular Meeting of the SPC on Planning and Urban Development Committee.”

On 2017 March 20, Council received the Urban Design Review Framework Document for information, and directed “Administration to revise the Terms of Reference for the Urban Design Review Panel and provide a more detailed implementation plan with stakeholder input, including the Industry/City Process Improvement Working Group, and return through the SPC on Planning and Urban Development to Council no later than 2017 July.”

On 2016 June 20, Council directed “Administration to consult with interested stakeholders and report back to Council, by 2017 March, through the SPC on Planning & Urban Development, with an update on the process changes initiated, and recommendations to further improve urban design outcomes.”

On 2015 July 27, Council directed “Administration to conduct further consultation with interested stakeholders, and members of the NextCity Advisory Committee, and to return to Council through the SPC on Planning and Urban Development, no later than Q2 2016.”

On 2004 September 13, Council adopted the current Terms of Reference for the Urban Design Review Panel, subsequently amended 2007 October 23.

BACKGROUND

On 2017 March 20, Council accepted for information the Urban Design Review Framework, and directed Administration to revise the Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) Terms of Reference and develop an Implementation Plan with stakeholder input. The result of this was a revised Terms of Reference (Attachment 2), together with a separate Urban Design Review Protocol (Attachment 3) detailing the design review process and the roles and responsibilities of both the Panel and the City Wide Urban Design Team. The accompanying Implementation Plan (Attachment 4) described a staged introduction of the revisions, identified the process steps for various application types, proposed changes to enhance report clarity, and outlined training and monitoring goals. These documents were developed through a series of engagement sessions with previously engaged key stakeholders, and with members of the Industry/City Process Improvement Advisory Committee.

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The resulting documents, reflecting the results of this engagement, were presented to SPC on PUD on 2017 June 14. The recommendation of PUD was to approve the revised Terms of Reference for UDRP, to receive the Urban Design Review Protocol and Implementation Plan for information, and to further direct that Administration evaluate expanding the Urban Design Review Panel's mandate to include Outline Plans and report back in a future monitoring report through PUD no later than Q1 2019. At Council on 2017 June 26, there was discussion around the letter (referenced above) provided on June 22 (Attachment 1) and there was concern that there were still issues which BILD Calgary and NAIOP, on behalf of their membership, felt were not satisfactorily resolved. This resulted in Council's direction to refer the report back to Administration.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Council's 2017 June 26 direction to Administration to conduct further engagement with Industry arose from concerns raised in the letter received June 22, jointly signed by BILD Calgary Region and NAIOP. The letter indicated support for the intent of achieving better urban design, and for having design discussions earlier in the process, but made suggestions and/or raised concerns regarding a number of issues, including (in summary):

- Requesting that UDRP comments be sent directly to applicants
- Requesting that UDRP include applicants in all discussion of their files
- Limiting Administration's role in advising UDRP without the applicant present
- Reinforcing the Applicant's role in explaining the design rationale and context
- Clarifying the roles of the applicant and Administration in resolving conflicting advice
- Suggesting specific ideas around outreach to industry and measuring success

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

The Working Group, assembled during the previous phases of the project and containing representation from UDRP, CPC, Calgary Approvals Coordination, BILD Calgary and CPAG process experts reconvened for an additional two meetings. A representative of NAIOP, as a co-signatory to the June 22 letter, was invited to join the group. During this phase, one additional stakeholder workshop was held specifically to review the issues identified in the June 22 letter and to reach agreement on appropriate revisions to the UDRP Terms of Reference and associated documents. All 100 previously identified stakeholders were invited to this session, as well as invitations coordinated by BILD Calgary Region and NAIOP to specific members of their respective groups. Detailed discussion of the issues and clarification of the reasons for the concerns occurred in the stakeholder workshop and subsequent Working Group meeting. This resulted in consensus on further refinement of the wording and consequent edits to the Urban Design Review Panel Terms of Reference (Attachment 2), the Urban Design Review Protocol (Attachment 3), and the Implementation Plan (Attachment 4). A summary of the agreed to amendments to the three associated documents is included (Attachment 5).

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Strategic Alignment

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) promotes site and building design that contributes to high quality living environments and attractive, walkable, diverse neighbourhoods and communities (MDP 2.4.2), and coherent and collaborative design of streets, building interfaces and public spaces (MDP 2.4.3). Improvements to the design review process, including more effective involvement by UDRP resulting in improved urban design outcomes, will support these objectives. The proposed design review process refinements align with the ongoing initiatives of Calgary Approvals Coordination.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

Making recommendations and decisions on urban design earlier in the process creates a more transparent process for all stakeholders. An urban design review process that involves the right expertise at the right points of the development approval process with the right information will help result in improved urban design of benefit to all Calgarians.

Environmental

No implications identified.

Economic (External)

Earlier recommendations on urban design will result in greater transparency and clarity for all stakeholders. It will also lead to improved development outcomes. Consistent early discussion of significant design issues will avoid costly changes and additional time spent later in the process.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

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Internal process improvements will be part of Planning and Development's existing operating budget and completed through internal resources.

Current and Future Capital Budget

No implications identified.

Risk Assessment

Changes to the scope and mandate of UDRP could result in higher application circulation volume, additional pressure on staff to manage the volume, and pressure on UDRP to perform more frequently and more quickly; increasing the Panel size could lead to challenges attracting the required number of qualified panelists.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Through engagement, Administration and Industry have resolved the concerns expressed in the June 22 letter, and reached consensus on revisions to the Urban Design Review Panel Terms of Reference and accompanying Protocol and Implementation Plan. The revised documents will clarify and enhance the design review process through providing greater clarity of roles and administrative consistency while maintaining the “peer review” function of UDRP. Industry has agreed to participate in monitoring the outcomes which will inform decision making around continuous improvements to the process. Overall the proposed enhancements to this process will create more opportunities for dialogue around City design and policy with the objective of achieving superior design outcomes.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. BILD/NAIOP 2017 June 22 Letter to Calgary City Council
2. Urban Design Review Panel Terms of Reference
3. Urban Design Review Protocol
4. Implementation Plan
5. Summary of Amendments as Agreed to By All Parties