

**Planning & Development Report to  
SPC on Planning and Urban Development  
2020 July 15**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
PUD2020-0721**

## **Guidebook for Great Communities Referral for Additional Direction**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the 2020 March 4 Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Planning and Urban Development (PUD) meeting, Administration presented a report on the Guidebook for Great Communities (Attachment 1). Committee recommended that the report go to the 2020 April 27 Public Hearing of Council; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was deferred to a later Public Hearing, sometime before the end of Q4, 2020.

At the 2020 March 4 PUD meeting, Administration heard feedback and comments on the proposed Guidebook for Great Communities (Guidebook) from committee members and members of the public. Administration has been reflecting on these comments and would like to propose changes to the Guidebook now, rather than wait for future updates through the Sustainment program. To enable Administration to address the concerns, on 2020 June 15, Council referred PUD2020-0207 back to Administration for further work, to consider feedback heard since the 2020 March 4 SPC on PUD.

This report summarizes the feedback received and outlines potential refinements that could be made to the Guidebook to address these comments. This includes a proposed coordinated scope of work, timelines, and engagement plan for both the Guidebook and the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan (PUD2020-0739).

The Guidebook for Great Communities is critical in supporting city building in our current economic environment. It will provide the foundation for updated and consistent policy at the local area plan level that will allow communities an opportunity to create a vision for what growth and evolution will look like as Calgary looks to attract new Calgarians, businesses and investment to support our economic recovery.

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**ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development recommend that Council:

1. Direct Administration to revise the proposed Guidebook for Great Communities based on the work outlined in Attachment 3 and Attachment 4 and to return to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development no later than 2021 January, in conjunction with the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan.
2. Direct Administration to return to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development with a scope for the Renewal of the Land Use Bylaw at the same time as the Guidebook for Great Communities.

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, 2020 JULY 15:**

That Council adopt the Administration Recommendations contained in Report PUD2020-0721.

Oppositions to the Recommendations:

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Against: Councillor Gondek, Councillor Farrell and Councillor Jones

Excerpt from the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Standing Policy Committee Planning and Urban Development, held 2020 July 15:

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**"Moved by** Councillor Carra

That with respect to Report PUD2020-0721 the following be approved:

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development recommend that Council:

1. Direct Administration to revise the proposed Guidebook for Great Communities based on the work outlined in Attachment 3 and Attachment 4 and to return to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development no later than 2021 January, in conjunction with the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan.
2. Direct Administration to return to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development with a scope for the Renewal of the Land Use Bylaw at the same time as the Guidebook for Great Communities.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

For: (4): Councillor Carra, Councillor Demong, Councillor Woolley, and Councillor Farkas

Against: (4): Councillor Gondek, Councillor Farrell, Councillor Jones, and Councillor Sutherland

**MOTION DEFEATED**

Committee allowed Councillor Demong to change his vote from "Against" to "For".

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Moved by Councillor Farrell

That with respect to Report PUD2020-0721, the following be approved:

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development:

1. Direct Administration to:

- a. Revise the proposed Guidebook for Great Communities (Attachment 2 as contained in Attachment 1) to address items 1-9 as outlined in Attachment 3;
- b. Prepare a bylaw for the Guidebook for Great Communities including those changes; and
- c. Forward the proposed Bylaw, and report PUD2020-0721, to accommodate the required advertising, directly to the 2020 October 5 Combined Meeting of Council.

2. Recommend that Council hold a Public Hearing for the proposed bylaw at the 2020 October 5 Combined Meeting of Council:

- a. Give three readings to the proposed Bylaw;
- b. Direct Administration to use the policies of chapter 3 of the Guidebook for Great Communities throughout the built-out areas as guidelines when reviewing development permits;
- c. Direct Administration to, upon approval of the Guidebook, develop a scope for the Renewal of the Land Use Bylaw, and return to through the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development by Q1, 2021.
- d. And bring forward urban form category refinements to the guidebook in conjunction with subsequent local area plans.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

For: (2): Councillor Farrell, and Councillor Jones

Against: (6): Councillor Gondek, Councillor Carra, Councillor Demong, Councillor Sutherland, Councillor Woolley, and Councillor Farkas

**MOTION DEFEATED”**

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### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

At the 2020 June 15 meeting of Council it was moved by Councillor Gondek, and seconded by Councillor Carra, that Council refer Guidebook for Great Communities, Report PUD2020-0207 and New Policy North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Wards 4, 7 and 9 Report PUD2020-0164, back to Administration for further work, to return to the 2020 July 15 Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development for further direction.

At the 2020 March 16 Combined Meeting of Council, it was moved by Councillor Demong, and seconded by Mayor Nenshi, that with respect to Verbal Report C2020-0390, Covid-19: Corporate Response Update (Verbal), that the following be adopted: That Council:

1. Approve the COVID-19 City of Calgary Governance Structure; and
2. Authorize Administration, through the City Manager and appropriate General Manager, to defer any Council and Committee reports due in Q1 or Q2 2020 to Q4 or a later date without further Council approval, expect where Council direction or approval is required by legislated timelines.

At the 2020 March 4 SPC on Planning and Urban Development moved by Councillor Carra that with respect to Report PUD2020-0207, the following be approved, as amended: That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development:

1. Direct Administration to:
  - a. Prepare a bylaw for the Guidebook for Great Communities as outlined in Attachment 2; and
  - b. Forward the proposed Bylaw, to accommodate the required advertising, and this report, directly to the 2020 April 27 Combined Meeting of Council.
2. Recommend that Council:
  - a. Hold a Public Hearing for the proposed bylaw at the 2020 April 27 Combined Meeting of Council, and give first reading to the proposed Bylaw and prior to second and third readings, amend the bylaw as follows:
    - i. Replace the term "Tall scale" with the term "Highest Scale" where ever they appear in the bylaw.
    - ii. Replace the term "minor" when referring to the three activity levels defined in the urban form classification system to the terms "moderate" wherever they appear in the bylaw.
  - b. Direct Administration to use the policies of chapter 3 of the Guidebook for Great Communities throughout the built-out areas as guidelines when reviewing development permits;
  - c. Direct Administration to, upon approval of the Guidebook, develop a scope for the Renewal of the Land Use Bylaw, as contained in Attachment 3, and return to Council prior to the mid-cycle budget deliberations for 2020; and
  - d. Direct Administration to undertake the work associated with the motion arising from 2019 July 29 (Report CPC2019-0759), to bring forward land use bylaw amendments that better facilitate mid-block rowhouse implementation, and to return in conjunction with Phase 1b of the renewal of the Land Use Bylaw.

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Additional previous Council direction can be found in Attachment 2.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Guidebook is part of a group of interconnected planning initiatives, which lay the foundation for the next generation of planning in Calgary. Working with, and building on existing policies, the Next Generation Planning System realizes thriving communities that are loved by everyone, by enabling development and investment through clear, accessible plans, strategies and tools that strategically guide and support growth. This program of initiatives provides a coordinated and clear planning system for the whole city, removes outdated and redundant policy and creates a more robust toolbox to enable reinvestment and growth in Calgary. See report PUD2020-0207 (Attachment 1) for a summary of the Next Generation Planning System.

The Guidebook is a planning policy document that provides a consistent approach to local area planning through common planning policies and a plan framework that enables communities to evolve in a manner that responds to the needs of current and future residents. Over the last year and a half, Administration has been engaging on the Guidebook through the development of local area plans, including North Hill, Heritage and Westbrook local area plans. Based on feedback received in that process, Administration had been preparing refinements to the Guidebook through an ongoing sustainment process.

Since the 2020 March 4 SPC on Planning and Urban Development, Administration has been considering feedback received, and working on potential refinements toward clarity and simplicity of both the Guidebook for Great Communities, as well as the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan. Yet, due to the direction from the SPC on Planning and Urban Development on 2020 March 4 to proceed to Council for a public hearing, Administration was limited in what changes could be made, advertised, and brought to public hearing. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the significance of these planning policies, Administration had delayed the timing of the public hearings so that Calgarians could focus on their families and businesses.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Administration has been considering impacts to the City Planning & Policy workplan initiatives and strategizing around an appropriate way forward that continues to allow for meaningful public participation. To help inform Administration's approach, a panel discussion was held at the 2020 May 06 meeting of the SPC on Planning and Urban Development to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic situation and associated challenges and opportunities with respect to ongoing planning work and public engagement. The panel consisted of nine stakeholder representatives, including members from Administration, Calgary Chapter of the Commercial Real Estate Development Association (NAIOP), the Federation of Calgary Communities, the University of Calgary, the development industry, and community associations. The panel discussion covered various aspects for consideration with respect to public engagement during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This feedback, along with other important inputs and considerations, will help to inform Administration's approach for a way

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forward with ongoing planning work during the pandemic. This feedback was then received by committee on 2020 June 3.

On 2020 June 15, Council approved a motion to refer the Guidebook for Great Communities and the North Hill Communities LAP back to the 2020 July 15 SPC on Planning and Urban Development (PUD) meeting rather than proceed to a public hearing. This request was made so that Administration could present an overview of the input and feedback received to date and for Committee to consider specific direction in response to that feedback, which may result in further work.

#### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

Below is an outline of feedback received from various sources that could be considered through updates to the Guidebook. Specific actions for the North Hill LAP are included in PUD2020-0739, which will also be presented at the July 15 SPC on Planning and Urban Development meeting. This feedback below includes items that were flagged as part of the proposed Guidebook sustainment program, feedback heard from the public at committee as well as feedback received from members of Council. For a more detailed description of each of these items (and options for how the plans can be amended to address this feedback), please see Attachment 3.

While most of the changes are minor in nature and do not require additional external outreach, changes to the Urban Form Categories are more substantial and will require targeted engagement with stakeholders to determine a final solution (see Attachment 4 for more details).

#### **Items for Consideration**

The following is an overview of the items:

1. Various updates to the North Hill Communities Plan

There are a number of minor changes desired by stakeholders for the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan. Some of these changes also require parallel amendments to the Guidebook as a result. These changes range from clarifying wording to adding supporting policies to ensure the two documents can be read together. More detail on the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan is provided in the associated report, PUD2020-0758.

2. Heritage Preservation Policies

An update report on the Heritage Conservation Tools and Incentive report will also be presented to the 15 July 2020 SPC on Planning and Urban Development committee meeting providing further direction on this work. The ongoing work on funding and policy tools for heritage conservation, may result in future amendments to the Guidebook as well as to the North Hill Communities LAP. Knowing the concern, Administration has created interim wording for each local area plan currently underway that includes heritage assets, including the North Hill Communities LAP. This referral offers the opportunity for more time to develop and include details on the tools in response to that direction, allowing stakeholders to have a better understanding of the tools and their intentions.

3. Climate Change

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While policies related to climate change mitigation and adaptation are contained throughout the Guidebook, there is more work to be done with the City's Climate Adaptation group as they create a climate adaptation tool to assess local area plans. This would require more engagement with stakeholders and could feed into the Guidebook and help to provide a more robust policy approach to climate. Administration is proposing some minor amendments to the Guidebook in the near term that will help pave the way for more climate-related policies once the adaptation tool has been completed. These types of amendments will be included in the continued sustainment of the Guidebook.

### 4. Scale

Through the participation in ongoing local area plan processes (North Hill, Westbrook, Heritage Communities) we have received feedback from stakeholders, including Calgary Planning Commission, regarding the potential need for an additional scale category between Limited (up to 3 storeys) and Low (up to 6 storeys). Some of the concern has been that development up to six storeys may not be appropriate in all locations, but heights above what is allowed for in the Limited scale category (3 storeys or less) is appropriate. This referral offers the opportunity to see if the current wording in the Guidebook which enables a local area plan to modify the maximum number of storeys allowed for in an assigned scale category where there is sufficient rationale to do so, is sufficient to address this issue or whether another solution is required.

### 5. Low-Density Residential Areas

The Calgary Municipal Development Plan indicates that a variety of low density housing forms (single-detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, suites, rowhouses and more) are appropriate everywhere low-density housing is desired (section 2.2.5(a)). The Guidebook for Great Communities is intended to implement and build upon the policies of the Municipal Development Plan by ensuring policy is in place to allow communities to grow and evolve over time. These policies do not eliminate the ability to have single detached dwellings. This referral will allow Administration to craft wording that would allow a future local area plan to determine areas of communities, where there are merits to enabling one type of low density form. It should be noted that this policy does not intend to exclude housing choice through Calgary's communities; but will enable communities going through a local area plan process to focus on areas where growth and evolution can occur in a meaningful way to support complete communities.

### 6. Urban Form Classification System and Urban Form Categories

Feedback and ideas regarding simplifying the urban form classification system in the Guidebook have been expressed by some members of Council, Calgary Planning Commission members, and internal stakeholders. Administration believes a reorganization of the system to simplify it and make it more user friendly and will greatly benefit the Guidebook's usability. Taking the time to evolve the system also allows for consideration, learning and response to the insights that have been gained through participation in the pilot local area plans (North Hill, Westbrook, and Heritage). This is the most significant change being proposed for the Guidebook and will require engagement with stakeholders and testing through the pilot local area plans (see Attachment 4 for more details).

Alternatively, the Guidebook for Great Communities could be approved as proposed in 2020 March (Attachment 1) and any additional feedback received in addition to the items outlined in

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Attachment 3 will be considered as part of the Sustainment program as the Guidebook will continue to be a living document.

### **Land Use Bylaw Work**

Due to the delay of approving the Guidebook, Administration must push back work on the renewal of the Land Use Bylaw. The Guidebook sets the foundational policy that will guide a renewed Bylaw and should be adopted prior to working on implementation. This would also mean a delay to the work arising out of 2019 July 29 (Report CPC2019-0759), to bring forward land use bylaw amendments that better facilitate mid-block rowhouse implementation. When the Guidebook is brought forward for approval, a subsequent report will be brought forward to outline a scope for the bylaw renewal including how these amendments for mid-block rowhouse will be completed.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

The above items were informed by the extensive engagement undertaken during the development of the Guidebook; however, since the Guidebook had already been recommended for public hearing by committee, specific engagement on the above items would not have been possible to undertake until such time as either the public hearing occurred, and direction given to Administration. It is anticipated that the revisions and actions required to address the changes would include targeted outreach to key area stakeholders with a limited and focused approach to engagement. Detailed engagement is only anticipated for the revisions to the Urban Form Categories. Administration will also continue to focus on an outreach and education program for the general public and the local area plan communities.

### **Strategic Alignment**

The Guidebook advances The City's approach to planning, focused on implementing the Municipal Development Plan and advancing the Citizen Priority of A City of Safe & Inspiring Neighbourhoods. The initiatives within this program deliver on five of the Council Priorities for the City Planning & Policy Service Line for 2020: A. Implementing the Municipal Development Plan/Calgary Transportation Plan; B. City-Wide Growth Strategy; C. Modernized Community Planning; D. Connecting Planning and Investment; and, E. A Renewed Land Use Bylaw.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

Calgary is at a critical moment in time where economic recovery and attracting new businesses relies on being able to provide for diversified communities, varied housing choices, investment opportunities and growth. Calgary's demographics and household income are changing, along with the environment around us. Furthermore, business needs and trends require The City to be nimble and progressive, resulting in an opportunity to think about how to shape a city that responds to all Calgarians regardless of age, income, or gender.

In line with the goals of the MDP, this work will increase development certainty, growth, economic investment and varied built form outcomes. Calgary's recovery requires that we continue to evolve with our development sector, reduce the time required for applications and fewer site-specific applications for land use redesignations. The Guidebook and North Hill Communities Local Area Plan are the first steps to modern, streamlined policy which will provide a more inclusive and equitable city, and one that retains and attracts residents and businesses.



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### **Financial Capacity**

#### ***Current and Future Operating Budget:***

There are no impacts to the current and future operating budget as a result of this report. It should be noted; however, that other work that was anticipated is now being delayed so resources can remain on the evolution of these plans.

#### ***Current and Future Capital Budget:***

There are no current or future capital budget implications associated with this report. However, to deliver on the next generation of planning, individual planning initiatives may present capital recommendations necessary to support budget investments.

### **Risk Assessment**

The major risk that this report presents is the resulting delays and adjustments to the City Planning and Policy Service work plan due to reallocation of resources to the Guidebook and North Hill LAP. Three main adjustments are noted below:

1. Timing relative to Land Use Bylaw renewal

While Administration has proposed five big changes that will form the foundation for a renewal of the Land Use Bylaw, and previously anticipated bringing a scoping document to Council by Q3 2020, work on the update and new regulation will be delayed until the Guidebook is adopted as the Guidebook provides the foundation for its renewal. This is to ensure we are aligning policy with regulation, while also ensuring that resources are used where they are needed in the immediate term. The risk is that outdated regulation will remain in place, impacting the achievement of overall outcomes. This risk will be mitigated by focusing on updates to the existing Land Use Bylaw for the remainder of 2020 to help ensure Administration is responding to the needs of businesses.

2. In-flight local area plans timing adjustments

The additional time required to complete revisions to the Guidebook will cause delays to the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan, Greater Westbrook and Heritage Communities Local Growth Planning Projects, as well as the Inglewood-Ramsay: Historic East Calgary Area Redevelopment Plan. While North Hill can assess amendments based on their draft plan, Westbrook and Heritage LAPs are currently mid-point, which may mean that the process they are going through with stakeholders will need adjusting to incorporate new policies proposed by the amendments to the Guidebook. These amendments are timely, and we do not anticipate losing any of the work completed to date on the LAPs. It is most likely that there will be a delay in bringing these plans to Council, to ensure consistency with the revised Guidebook. For example, changes to the Urban Form Categories will impact the draft maps for each plan. This risk will be mitigated by working together with the Local Area Planning teams and ensuring that these Local Area Plans have the resources required to bring stakeholders along and doing timeline adjustments as required.

3. Timing for future Local Area Plans

One of the biggest challenges of changing the planning system and introducing new policy documents in a parallel approach is that it takes time. Ensuring the local area plans are done in

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a way that stakeholders can understand and appreciate the magnitude of change is imperative to their success. While more information can be found on timing in Attachment 5, the revisions to the Guidebook must be acknowledged as adjusting other work as anticipated. The Local Area Plan program aims to begin approximately 4 new plans per year. Administration had planned on beginning two new local area plans in the spring and fall of 2020 which have been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and may now need to be further adjusted due to the additional time required to address changes to the Guidebook. Those communities will be informed of changes and additional outreach and education on the Guidebook will help to provide a better understanding of the planning process ahead of their local area plan launching.

#### **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

The Guidebook for Great Communities helps to position Calgary for economic recovery and stability of growth within our neighbourhoods, while responding to Council's strong desire for a modernized approach to the planning of our communities. With a fluctuating economy, reluctance towards change, and shifting demographics, it is more important than ever for The City to be proactive, inclusive and bold. While this report presents a significant change to our established practice of planning communities, it accommodates an outcome that is the focus of all of Calgary's communities - making life better every day for the people within our city. The Guidebook for Great Communities focuses on the experiences people have in the places they love. It positions Calgary for orderly and predictable investment. Administration recommends adoption of the recommendations in this report.

#### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Attachment 1 – PUD2020-0207 Guidebook for Great Communities March 2020 Report
2. Attachment 2 – Additional Previous Council Direction
3. Attachment 3 – Summary of Feedback Received and Future Considerations
4. Attachment 4 – Scope of Work and Outreach for Urban Form Classification System changes
5. Attachment 5 – Proposed Timeline Based on Scope of Work and Outreach Plan
6. **Attachment 6 – Public Submissions**
7. **Attachment 7 – Late Public Submissions**