

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

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
PUD2020-0739

## **North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Referral for Additional Direction**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the 2020 March 4 Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Planning and Urban Development (PUD) meeting, Administration presented a report on the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan (Plan) (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, and in the months following that meeting, Administration received feedback from Councillors and community stakeholders regarding desired changes to the Plan as well as the proposed Guidebook for Great Communities (Guidebook). In addition, at the 2020 June 16 Combined Meeting of Council, Council approved recommendations for a revised Green Line LRT alignment that includes a new station planned at Centre Street N and 9 Avenue N. While the proposed Plan supports transit-oriented development along Centre Street N, it does not specifically identify this new station. Given that both the Plan and the Guidebook had already received Committee's recommendation, Administration was unable to make changes to either document. To enable Administration to address the comments and changes, on 2020 June 15, Council referred PUD2020-0164 back to Administration for further work to consider the feedback received, as well as the approved Green Line LRT alignment.

This report summarizes the feedback received and outlines potential refinements that could be made to the Plan to address these comments. This includes a proposed coordinated scope of work, timelines, and engagement plan for both the Guidebook (summarized in Report PUD2020-0721) and the Plan.

#### **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development recommend that Council direct Administration to revise the proposed North Hill Communities Local Area Plan as outlined in Attachment 2 and Attachment 3, and to return to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development no later than 2021 January, in conjunction with the Guidebook for Great Communities.

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

That Council adopt the Administrative Recommendations contained in Report PUD2020-0739.

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

At the 2020 June 15 Combined Meeting of Council, it was moved by Councillor Gondek, and seconded by Councillor Carra, that Council refer the Guidebook for Great Communities (PUD2020-0207) and New Policy: North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Wards 4, 7 and 9 (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.

### **North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Referral for Additional 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 Farrell that with respect to Report PUD2020-0164, the following be approved: That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development recommend that Council:

1. Hold a Public Hearing at the 2020 April 27 Combined Meeting of Council:
  - a. Give FIRST READING to the proposed bylaw, the proposed North Hill Communities Local Area Plan (Attachment 2); and
  - b. WITHHOLD second and third readings of the proposed bylaw until North Hill Communities Local Area Plan has been approved by the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board.
2. Following third reading of the proposed bylaw, the proposed North Hill Communities Local Area Plan:
  - a. RESCIND, by resolution, the Centre Street North Special Study, the Highland Village Green Design Guidelines, and the North Bow Special Study; and
  - b. REPEAL, by bylaw, the North Hill Area Redevelopment Plan, Crescent Heights Area Redevelopment Plan, Winston Heights-Mountview Area Redevelopment Plan, and 16 Avenue North Urban Corridor Area Redevelopment Plan.

Previous Council direction relating to the North Hill Communities Local Growth Planning project can be found in Report PUD2020-0164 (Attachment 1).

### **BACKGROUND**

The Guidebook and the Plan are 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 development and investment in Calgary. See Report PUD2020-0164 (Attachment 1) for a summary of the Next Generation Planning System.

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### **North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Referral for Additional Direction**

The North Hill Communities Local Growth Planning project launched in 2018 September and over the following year and a half, Administration worked with stakeholders to develop a comprehensive planning vision and policies for the area's nine residential communities and one industrial area. This process was characterized by close collaboration between the Guidebook and the North Hill Communities project teams and an integrated engagement process that informed both plans. On 2020 March 4, Administration presented both the Plan and the Guidebook to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development which ultimately recommended that Council hold public hearings on both documents.

Since the 2020 March 4 SPC on Planning and Urban Development, Administration has been considering feedback received, and working on potential refinements to the Plan and the Guidebook. Yet, due to the direction from the SPC on Planning and Urban Development 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 work plan 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 6 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 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 Plan and the Guidebook back to the 2020 July 15 SPC on Planning and Urban Development 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 refinements.

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

The following provides an outline of items that could be addressed through revisions to the Plan. The items are detailed in Attachment 2 and are based on feedback received from Councillors at the 2020 March 4 committee meeting, including the list of 24 items that was introduced but was not approved/accepted at that meeting, community associations, the development industry, and business improvement areas. Specific items for consideration and action for the Guidebook are included in PUD2020-0721 which will also be presented at the 2020 July 15 SPC on Planning and Urban Development meeting.

## North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Referral for Additional Direction

While many of the changes can be accommodated through revisions to the Plan and a Listen and Learn level of engagement, more substantial changes to the Guidebook including revisions to the Urban Form Categories may require additional engagement with North Hill Communities stakeholders.

### Items for Consideration

The following is an overview of 10 thematic areas for potential revisions to the proposed Plan:

1. Alignment with the Guidebook

Feedback from the 2020 March 4 SPC on PUD meeting as well as stakeholder feedback identified that the Plan and the Guidebook should be more closely aligned in terms of content and visual identity. To address this concern, this report recommends that the Plan be revised to remove duplicate descriptions and sections for urban form categories, policy and scale modifiers, and adding content to promote quality streetscape outcomes. Administration will also more closely align the visual elements of the Plan including document layout, figures, and images.

2. Alignment with approved Green Line LRT

On 2020 June 15, Council approved the alignment for the Green Line LRT. This alignment includes a new bridge over the Bow River to the community of Crescent Heights and a new station located at Centre Street N and 9 Avenue N. As the Plan was finalized prior to this decision, revisions are proposed to formally identify this station in the Plan and to ensure the policies and maps support transit-oriented development in this location. This work would also include identifying core and transition areas around future Green Line LRT stations to more closely align the Plan with the Guidebook and identify, where appropriate, minimum development intensities to support the future Green Line LRT.

3. Local historical context and character

Comments received from Councillors, community associations and business improvement areas expressed a desire to include more historical community/neighbourhood context and character in the Plan as well as improved recognition of Indigenous history. Administration proposes adding additional historical and character content and including the Heritage Planning Areas map (Map C) in the statutory part of the Plan. Additional content will also be added to better recognize Indigenous history.

4. Urban tree canopy

The urban tree canopy is one of the defining characteristics of the North Hill Communities and stakeholders expressed the desire to include better recognition and

## **North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Referral for Additional Direction**

revised policies to support the tree canopy. Potential revisions to the Plan include updating the Core Ideas found in Chapter 1: Visualizing Growth, as well as reviewing, and revising where necessary, tree policies in both the Plan and the Guidebook.

### 5. Opportunities for place making and public realm improvements

Some stakeholders indicated that the Plan should more clearly identify opportunities for place making and public realm improvements to support the Plan's vision. To better communicate and identify these opportunities, this report recommends revising Chapter 3: Supporting Growth and Appendix A: Implementation Options by focusing on desired public realm and place making improvements and including additional map(s) where necessary.

### 6. Parks and Open Space Frontages

Some Councillors at the 2020 March 4 SPC on PUD meeting expressed a desire for additional areas to be identified with the Parks and Open Space Frontage to better integrate redevelopment with existing parks and open spaces. There are potential revisions to both the Guidebook and the Plan that could address this. For the Plan specifically, revisions to Map 3: Urban Form could identify additional Parks and Open Space Frontages along key areas, including but not limited to, Confederation Park and Winston Heights Park.

### 7. Commercial Clusters, Neighbourhood Activity Centres, and mixed-use streets

At the 2020 March 4 SPC on PUD meeting, feedback from some Councillors suggested that the Plan should explore opportunities for more Commercial Clusters, Neighbourhood Activity Centres, and mixed-use streets. In conjunction with the potential revisions to the Guidebook's urban form categories, Administration will explore further opportunities for these and, where appropriate, identify them on the maps and/or with policies.

### 8. On-street parking

Feedback from councillors, the development industry, land owners, and business improvement areas expressed a desire to include on-street parking in key locations, such as along the area's Main Streets, to support commercial activities. To address this, Administration suggests that a policy could be included to formally explore on-street parking options along Urban and Neighbourhood Main Streets particularly in locations where Active Frontages have been identified. Related revisions for the Guidebook would support any potential policies in the Plan.

### 9. Mobility corridors

Some Councillors at the 2020 March 4 PUD meeting highlighted that the Plan should identify mobility corridors that align with and support the ongoing work for the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP), as well as the Pathway and Bikeway Plan. Administration will work with the appropriate internal stakeholders and include a new map in the Plan that

## **North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Referral for Additional Direction**

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graphically illustrates how the plans are aligned and that identifies mobility corridors (walking, cycling, and pathways) in the Plan area and connections to the surrounding area.

### 10. Road rights-of-way setbacks

Administration is currently working on a response to a Notice of Motion PFC2020-0046 that will comprehensively address the public realm considerations within road rights-of-way setbacks; however, Administration recommends that a new policy to provide general guidance for public realm improvements for road rights-of-way setbacks within the Plan area could be added to the Plan.

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

The above items were informed by the extensive engagement undertaken during the development of the Plan as well as more recent letters and feedback provided at and following the 2020 March 4 SPC on PUD meeting (See Engagement Summary Report in Attachment 1 and Attachment 4 of this report). However, as both the Plan and 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 or the above mentioned referral. It is anticipated that the revisions and actions required to address the above items can be undertaken with a focused *Listen and Learn* engagement approach. This approach would include targeted outreach to key area stakeholders with the intent to listen and learn about their plans, views, issues, concerns, expectations, and ideas to help inform the proposed revisions. The approach would build upon existing stakeholder knowledge of the Plan and not begin a new engagement program. If a more intensive engagement strategy is required as a result to major changes to the Urban Form Categories of the Guidebook, the engagement would be done in partnership with the Guidebook team.

## **Strategic Alignment**

The Guidebook and the Plan contribute to advancing the Next Generation Planning System and align with other initiatives being delivered as part of this program including advancing the goals and objectives of the Municipal Development Plan and Calgary Transportation Plan. Initiatives within the program are part of a systematic change to 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

## **North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Referral for Additional Direction**

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.

The proposed revisions to the Plan reinforce the overarching objective of providing opportunities for people to continue to choose to live, work and recreate in the North Hill Communities. The Plan, along with the Guidebook, will provide for greater development certainty, economic investment, and housing options in these nine communities and Greenview Industrial area. Together these will not only support and aid in attracting new businesses along the area's four Main Streets but they will also help realize investment and development to support the Green Line LRT.

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 North Hill Communities Local Area Plan is the first of its kind in Calgary, which represents modern, streamlined policy that will provide a more inclusive and equitable city. One that retains and attracts residents and businesses.

### **Financial Capacity**

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

There are no impacts to the current and future operating budget as a result of this report.

#### ***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**

There is risk that undertaking the proposed revisions will result in delays not only to approval of the Plan but also other related local area planning projects currently underway or slated to begin. Specifically, as a pilot project for the new multi-community planning approach, the additional time required to complete revisions to the Plan and the Guidebook will cause delays to the Greater Westbrook and Heritage Communities Local Growth Planning Projects, as well as the Inglewood-Ramsay: Historic East Calgary Area Redevelopment Plan. This risk may be mitigated by limiting revisions to the Plan to those items and actions identified in this report. Additional items or desired revisions to the Plan will require additional time to complete.

There is significant risk that substantial changes to the Guidebook's urban form classification system could create the need for more extensive stakeholder engagement particularly on the future growth concept as represented by the Plan's maps and associated policies. More extensive stakeholder engagement would require more time than contemplated in this report, further delaying approval of the Plan. This risk may be mitigated by limiting scope creep for any revisions to the Guidebook's urban form classification system and ensuring that revisions to the Plan and the Guidebook are coordinated as outlined in Attachment 3.

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2020 July 15

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
PUD2020-0739

### **North Hill Communities Local Area Plan Referral for Additional Direction**

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

The proposed revisions to the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan helps to position Calgary for economic recovery and stability of growth within these neighbourhoods. It addresses and responds to Council's strong desire for a modernized approach to the planning of our communities and towards enabling desired growth and development. The proposed revisions to the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan identified in this report will result in a plan that positions the North Hill Communities for stability and to realize great development and investment for years to come. Together with the Guidebook, the Plan represents a major step toward modernizing the City's approach to community planning and enabling growth and development in nine inner-city and established communities and the Greenview Industrial area. In addition, the Plan leverages the City's largest ever investment in public infrastructure, the Green Line LRT, by creating greater opportunities for people to choose to live and operate businesses in close proximity of this new LRT line. Finally, the proposed revisions respond to outstanding items raised by stakeholders demonstrating the City's commitment to listening to and acting on citizens' comments and concerns for the future of their communities.

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

1. Attachment 1 - PUD2020-0164 New Policy: North Hill Communities Local Area Plan March 2020 Report
2. Attachment 2 - Summary of Feedback Received and Future Considerations
3. Attachment 3 - Proposed Timeline Based on Scope of Work and Outreach Plan
4. Attachment 4 – Stakeholder Letters