

Background Discussions and Risks

There are several discussion topics that are associated with the direction of work and recommendations of this report. The topics below highlight the discussion and risks with each topic so that Council can have a better understanding of how decisions were made.

1. Low Density Residential

The debate about how to accommodate areas of Single Detached Dwelling affects many stakeholders and has become a topic of debate. Administration has weighed the options carefully to ensure that the goals of the Municipal Development Plan are achievable, Calgarians will have access to a variety of housing forms in all Communities while still ensuring our communities remain vibrant and successful. Administration has heard from a number of stakeholders with different perspectives on the topic. Some members of the development industry think the approach is too much and limits redevelopment too much and will impact the viability of our communities. This will impact the ability for communities to redevelop, to thrive and to see reinvestment. On the other hand, some of our community stakeholders don't see this going far enough and would like to continue the exclusionary and exclusive policies of today.

Administration's recommended option provides a balanced approach to respond to stakeholder's concerns, ensure communities are equitable and resilient, while still recognizing areas that are likely not needed for growth in order to achieve the goals of the Municipal Development Plan.

Administration could implement any of the options presented in this report; however, the risks of each of those options presented should be understood. More information on those risks is also contained in Attachment 4.

2. Risks of Further Delay

Should Council not adopt Administration's recommendations and direct Administration to do more work, there will be numerous impacts to the City Planning Policy Service Line and work plan. This risk would impact resourcing for projects as well as delay policy in much needed areas. This risk would also impact Calgary's ability to remain "Open for Business" as it would not signal a clear intent for how communities will meet the needs of current and future Calgarians and could leave ambiguity for developers and businesses.

Delaying would also risk the financial prudence of The City, incurring more costs to developing document that is unapproved. It will also take more of Council time, reducing efficiencies, to deal with ad hoc applications and questions at Council.

Administration knows that there will be further work to do to the Guidebook as local area plans are completed and as other Business Units complete their workplans over the next few years. Administration is committed to making sure this document continues to be responsive to the needs of communities and stakeholders, as well as, internally within The City.

a) North Hill Communities Local Area Plan

The additional time required to complete additional work 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 Historic East

- Calgary Area Redevelopment Plan. There would be a risk to added stakeholder fatigue and trust.
- b) Future local area plans
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. In addition, there will be additional plans slated for 2021 that would result in further delays.
 - c) 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 Q2 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.

The risks of the above would be mitigated by the fact that all teams are working together and can support one another through any future changes.

3. Fear of Change, or Impact of Change

There is a fear of change and that the Guidebook will change the fabric of communities. There is a substantial amount of apprehension around how and when change will happen in communities, what growth looks like and what the needs are of Calgarians given the economic challenges being faced. Calgary communities have been evolving for over 100 years and will continue to change to accommodate existing and new Calgarians. It is because of this evolution that The City embarks on the creation of local area plans for multiple communities to ensure that growth happens in a thoughtful way.

In addition, while the Guidebook itself does not prescribe densities, intensities, use or height to any parcel of land in the city, there is uncertainty as to what that process will look like with the upcoming local area plans, particularly given that they will encompass more communities than has historically been done. Further, there are outstanding projects that are underway which may result in future amendments to the Guidebook which has led to questions about how they will be implemented post-Guidebook adoption. Given this, Administration will work closely on future local area plans to ensure the Guidebook is implemented consistently. Further, through the Next Generation Planning Program work, increased collaboration and coordination between initiatives will ensure that all communities are approached in a thoughtful manner to discuss change and growth.

Finally, there is the perception that the Guidebook changes land use districts on the ground, and that there is a perception of how the Guidebook relates to the renewal of the Land Use Bylaw and upcoming new districts, despite multiple efforts to provide correct information. While the Guidebook itself does not change any existing land use on the ground, it does set up the framework for the delivery of potential new districts. Despite Administration's outreach efforts, a

better understanding around community change takes both time and trust. This needs to be built between all parties and must be looked at as a two-way approach. Administration is confident that this trust can be established over time through on-going education and events.

4. Long-term Implementation and Sustainment Risks

One identified risk is that the adoption of the Guidebook will begin a path for a planning system change. Ensuring appropriate change management solutions, implementation, and sustainment as the system is worked on, will be critical for all stakeholders, including Administration and Council. Further education and awareness will be needed both internally and externally to ensure that the aspects of a new system are understood. A sustainment process will support stakeholder relations, issue identification, interpretation/implementation issues, consistency, and solutions-based outcomes. More information on the Sustainment process can be found in Attachment 6.

5. A New Way of Engagement

Timelines have been a concern for both industry and communities, with the expectation that engagement on the Guidebook would be longer if Administration had followed a traditional approach. Through this project, Administration has attempted to engage stakeholders differently, knowing that the time projects have taken historically to engage are unrealistic moving forward. Part of engaging with stakeholders differently means that engagement cannot be done on an individual document, such as the Guidebook, and feedback should not be received through red-lined versions of the document. Administration has engaged on the content of the Guidebook but has done so through discussions on topics rather than an individual review of the wording of each policy. Multiple feedback sessions were held to both gather feedback and for Administration to educate and help stakeholders understand the Guidebook. Administration received feedback from all stakeholders, which was reviewed and assessed by Administration for inclusion into the Guidebook. Administration did a thorough job of reviewing each and every comment, however, did not provide red-lined versions back to stakeholders after each review as it would have added months to the process of delivering the Guidebook.

6. Evolution and Change of Communities isn't Understood

The next risk with not adopting this approach is the impact it could have on communities. Many of Calgary's communities within the built-out areas are declining in population, yet residents are still expecting the same, if not greater, level of service and amenities. While there has been a slight increase in renter-occupied dwellings over the past ten years, there has been a significant increase in housing prices across the city, increasing the difficulty for people to both become home owners or to be able to afford rent in the community of their choice. With over 50 per cent of rental units being accommodated through one dwelling form (apartments), a significant portion of renters are being accommodated in dwelling types that do not meet their needs, or within communities that do not accommodate the services they require for day-to-day life. Should Council not adopt the shift to the planning system, accommodating a broader range of housing choices throughout communities in order to fill this gap will be difficult.

By not having a variety of housing choices in each community, new residents are limited by where they can live, either based on their needs, housing preference or affordability. This makes it harder for investment to be made in these communities. It is critical that Council

understand the value of private investment, such as redevelopment, made in communities, which often spurs more investment. This can often lower the value of the homes in an area, as sellers often have to compete for a limited number of buyers, meaning community populations continue to decline resulting in even less investment than before. A declining population has impacts on surrounding businesses, reducing the number of local customers, which often means that businesses close or move to different areas.

Expanding the range of housing options in a community can also have a dramatic impact on the resiliency and sustainability of the people already living in these communities by allowing them to age in place, respond to their own changes in lifestyle needs, as well as allow them to remain close to the relationships and services they've connected with. One of the biggest concerns heard from community members was the ability for their children to buy homes in the communities they want to live in. Providing housing options allows for multi-generations to live close by one another and not be separated from an inability to afford housing.

7. Linking Investment to Growth

A recent theme in Calgary's communities is the desire for limited to no change in communities while still seeing investment in local amenities and infrastructure. Many speakers at Council Public Hearings refer to development such as rowhouses as "high density". This is a misconception, which has significant risks if perpetuated. Rowhouse development brings roughly the same amount of property taxes as a single detached or semi-detached unit and roughly requires the same level of infrastructure and utility servicing.

Subsequently, there is a misunderstanding between stakeholders in terms of what growth is required to sustain a community compared to the growth that requires new or enhanced investments. In order to understand the value of community evolution, communities and other stakeholders must be involved in discussions that highlight the opportunities and trade-offs needed to achieve a community vision. Growth must be presented in a way that shows what growth is viable in a community and have an understanding of when exceeding that growth is possible and how it can be mitigated.

8. Long-term Implementation Risks

One of the bigger risks that Administration has identified is the fact that the adoption of the Guidebook will begin a path for a planning system change. Ensuring appropriate change management solutions as the system is worked on, will be critical for all stakeholders, including Administration and Council. Further education and awareness will be needed both internally and externally to ensure that the aspects of a new system are understood.