



Urban Design Review Panel

MANDATE

The Urban Design Review Panel's mandate is to provide independent and professional urban design and architectural advice on development / major redevelopment proposals that may have significant impact on the public realm. The panel reviews and comments on pre-application enquiries, development permit applications, and development liaisons on sites city-wide.

COMPOSITION

12 Public Members

ANNUAL UPDATE & KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The panel continues to provide peer review and expert advice. The comments are directed to staff, the applicant, and the development authority, and are intended to encourage best practice approaches to development that are specific to a site's context. Advice from the panel assists the applicant and their design team by identifying areas for improvement to support better design outcomes.

Panel Selection Process Annual Update

- The co-chairs of the panel worked with Administration to develop a skills matrix to assist in the selection process for new panel members. The matrix includes professional affiliations and specialized skills. The panel also considers gender balance and diversity in the selection of new members. The selection process is focused on getting to the best balance of skill sets while working to ensure gender balance and diversity over time. Staggered terms ensure that a balance of skills and experience is maintained over time.
- The panel has worked with the boards, commissions, and committees' team at the City to develop a much more open and public selection process. This new process has started to attract a broader diversity of applicants and should continue to improve the potential for assembling a more diverse and inclusive panel in the future.
- The panel welcomed new members Kathy Oberg, Jadwiga Kroman and Rick Gendron in 2021. The panel thanks departing members Ben Bailey, Anna Lawrence, and Doug Little for their past contributions and work.
- Members of the panel attended a session on equity, diversity, and inclusion hosted by the City.
- See Appendix A for Overall Statistics

CHALLENGES

Submission Quality

- **Previous (2021) Challenge:** Submission packages presented to the panel vary dramatically in completeness and quality. Although the panel welcomes the opportunity to review projects early in their development, some packages do not have enough information to inform the discussion.
- **Update:** The panel has seen greater consistency of submission packages over the years, as applicants become increasingly familiar with the process and expectations.



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Feedback

- **Previous (2021) Challenge:** There is no formal feedback loop between the panel and the Calgary Planning Commission or Council. The panel receives no information on the results of the applications, other than to view Calgary Planning Commission and Council meetings. Without feedback, it is difficult to understand how effective panel comments are at improving results.
- **Update:** Occasionally the panel inquires about specific applications and outcomes, which are reported back to the panel. More recently, the City's Chief Urban Designer has summarized Calgary Planning Commission/Council conversations for the panel, which has improved the panel's understanding of the impact of their work.
- **Takeaway:** Administration should prepare an annual update which reports on circulation, review, and evaluation scores. An annual session with Calgary Planning Commission should also be organized to discuss the relevance, effectiveness, and value of the panel's comments to Calgary Planning Commission's review process. This will help ensure the current process is effective and that panel volunteer time is leveraged to the greatest extent possible.

WORKPLAN FOR THE NEXT YEAR

- In addition to Development Permit applications, the panel continues to review Pre-Application Enquiries and Land Use Amendments, as per the terms of reference. Early review of projects continues to be critical for the review to have impact on the development.
- Since March 2020, the panel reviews electronic submissions. This procedure reduces proponent costs and the environmental impact by eliminating hardcopy printing requirements.
- September 15, 2021, Council revised the Procedure Bylaw to support continued on-line meetings; as such, the panel will continue with remote presentations and meetings (via Microsoft Teams platform) indefinitely.
- The meeting frequency is anticipated to be like 2021, trending upward slightly in frequency.

OPERATIONS

- The panel continues to meet every two weeks (pending applicant submissions and application review timelines). Panel members are split into two panels that alternate; therefore, each panel meets a minimum of once a month.
- "Special sessions" are held in-between the regular meeting schedule in response to high volumes, as needed.
- The panel held 28 virtual meetings since May 2021 and reviewed 57 projects.
- Panel members frequently swap sessions between each other to accommodate individual commitments, conflicts, vacation schedules, etc.
- One to three submissions are reviewed per session.
- Each submission includes a presentation and panel discussion and is one hour in duration. Verbal comments from the discussion are consolidated and distributed after the meeting for member review and comment. Once finalized, Administration



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circulates to the applicant. Final comments are completed within approximately one week of the presentation.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A – Overall Statistics

APPENDIX A - OVERALL STATISTICS

| Overall Statistics | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | June 2018- May 2019 | June 2019- May 2020 | June 2020- May 2021 | June 2021- May 2022 |
| # UDRP meetings held | 27 | 23 | 32 | 28 |
| # regular scheduled sessions | 24 | 21 | 27 | 26 |
| # special sessions | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| # Development Permit/Development Liaison | 25 | 23 | 38 | 40 |
| # Pre-application, schematic reviews | 16 | 11 | 17 | 15 |
| # Land Use Amendment reviews | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Total # early design reviews | 20 | 15 | 21 | 17 |
| Total # projects reviewed | 45 | 38 | 60 | 57 |

