



# URBAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

## REPORT TO COUNCIL

June 21, 2022

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Mandate of the Urban Design Review Panel

The Panel's mandate is to **provide independent and professional urban design and architectural advice** on development and major redevelopment proposals that may have significant impact on the public realm. The Panel reviews and comments on:

- pre-application enquiries,
- land use redesignations,
- development permit applications,
- and development liaisons on sites citywide.

Comments from The Panel are **provided as peer review** recommendations to encourage best practices by **identifying areas for improvement to support better design outcomes.**



## 2. PANEL OVERVIEW & WORKLOAD

### Outline of Work Plan

The panel meets every two weeks. Two teams alternate, each team typically meeting monthly on scheduled Wednesdays.

“Special sessions” are held in-between the regular scheduled meetings in response to high application volumes as needed.

Panel members frequently swap sessions to accommodate individual commitments, conflicts of interest, etc.

The panel continues to review Pre-Application Enquiries and Land Use Amendments. This early review of projects is the most effective opportunity to meaningfully impact development.



## 2. PANEL OVERVIEW & WORKLOAD

### Summary of Work

#### Meetings and application review volumes

	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 reviews	25	23	38	40
Total # early design reviews	20	15	21	17
Total # projects reviewed	45	38	60	57

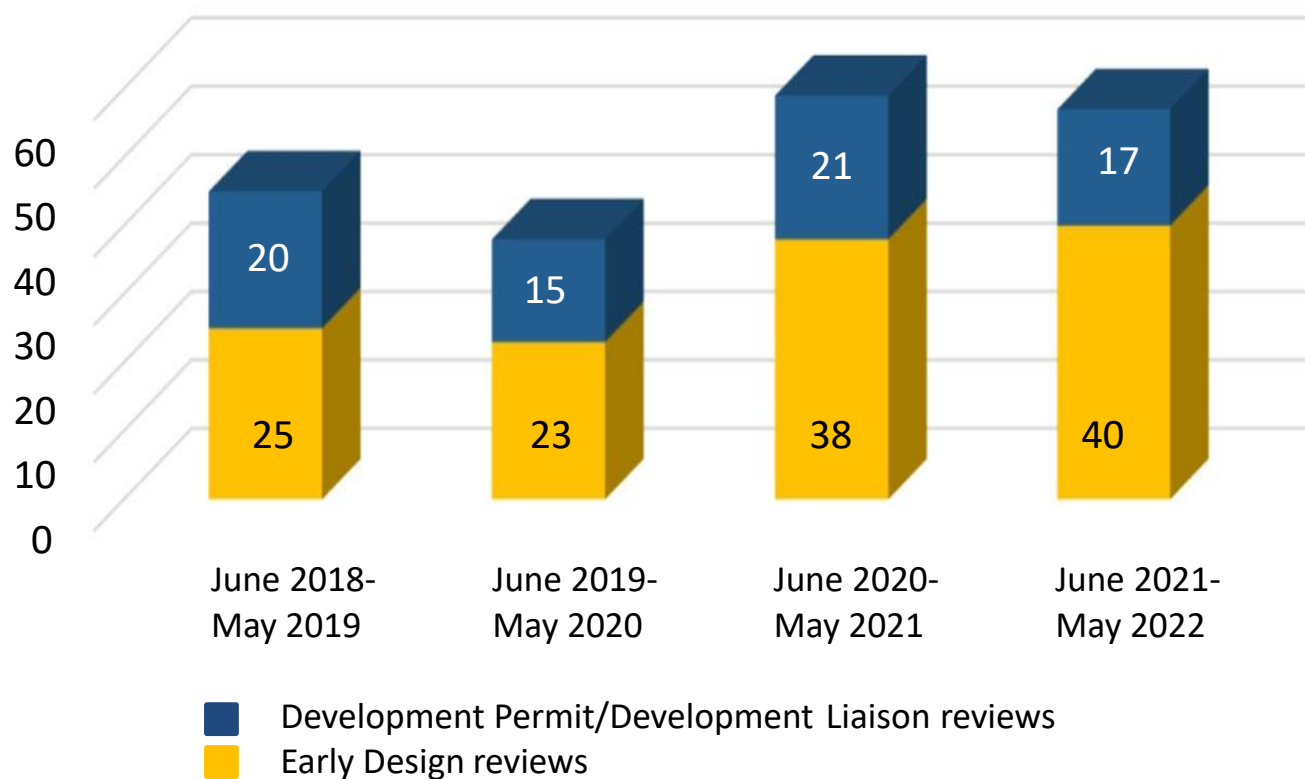
Note: UDRP refers to Urban Design Review Panel



## 2. PANEL OVERVIEW & WORKLOAD

### Summary of Work

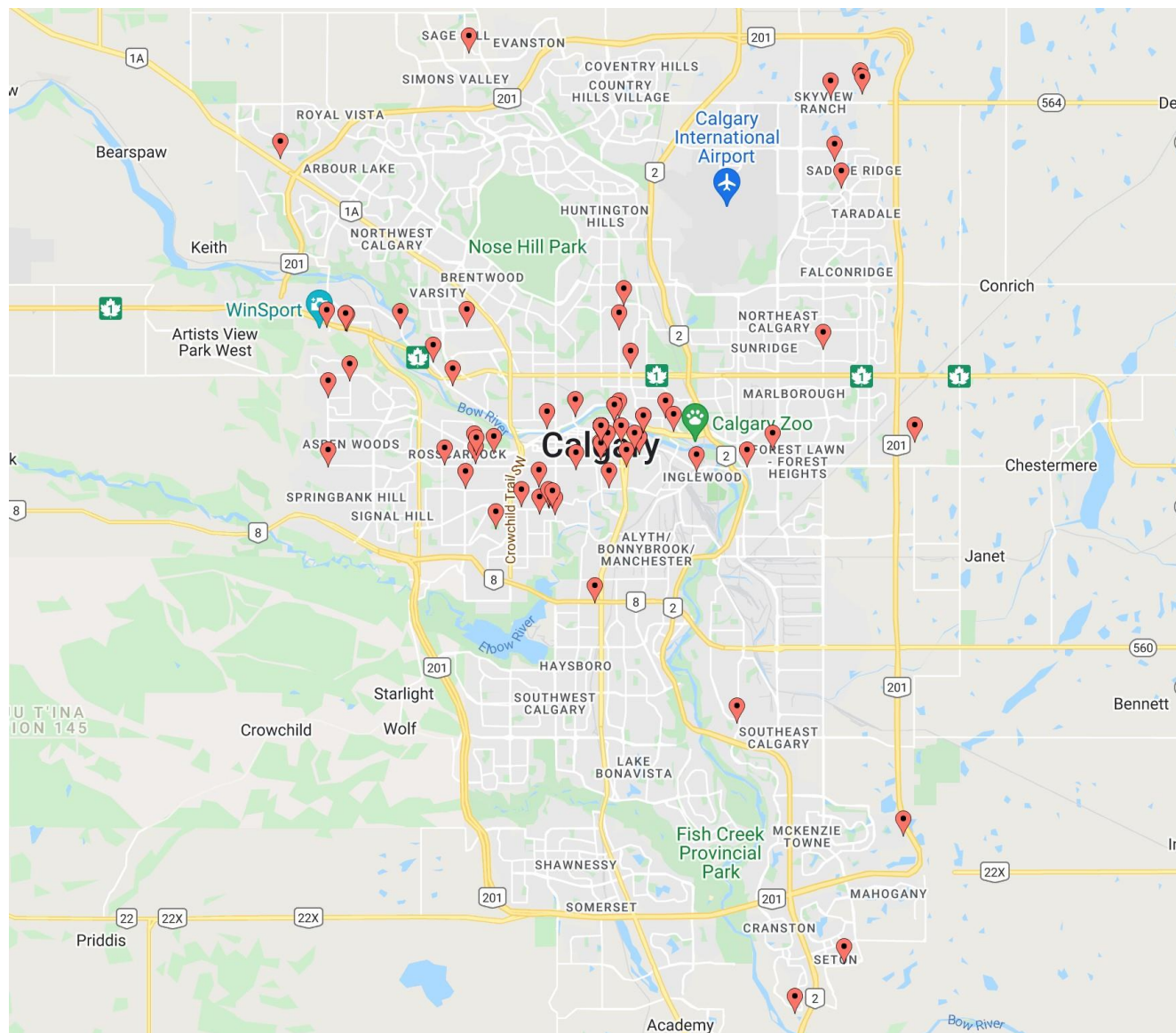
File Review Volume



## 2. PANEL OVERVIEW & WORKLOAD

### Summary of Work

#### 2021 application review locations



## 2. PANEL OVERVIEW & WORKLOAD

### COVID-19 Response

**March 2020:** the panel transitioned to electronic submissions exclusively. Benefits include reduced proponent costs and reduced environmental impact by eliminating hardcopy printing and delivery requirements.

**September 2021:** Council revised the Procedure Bylaw to support continued on-line meetings. Urban Design Review Panel will continue remote meetings indefinitely. Hybrid meetings can be accommodated if required.



## 2. PANEL OVERVIEW & WORKLOAD

### Challenges + Solutions for Mandate Fulfillment

#### Submission Quality

**Previous (2021) Challenge:** Submission packages vary dramatically in completeness and quality, occasionally lacking enough information to inform the discussion.

**Update:** Consistency of submission packages has improved as applicants become increasingly familiar with the process and expectations. Communication between City and Applicants is evident, further assisting in quality of review packages.





## 2. PANEL OVERVIEW & WORKLOAD

### Challenges + Solutions for Mandate Fulfillment

#### Feedback

**Challenge:** Lack of formal feedback loop between Urban Design Review Panel and Calgary Planning Commission or Council.

**Update:** Urban Design Review Panel inquires about specific applications and outcomes. The Chief Urban Designer regularly re-caps Calgary Planning Commission/Council conversations and outcomes during administrative portion of Panel sessions.

**Takeaway 1:** Initiate an annual report or survey of Planning Commission/Council indicating whether Panel comments are referenced, relevant, informative, etc.

**Takeaway 2:** Establish semi-annual meetings and discussions between Urban Design Review Panel and Calgary Planning Commission.





### 3. OTHER INFORMATION

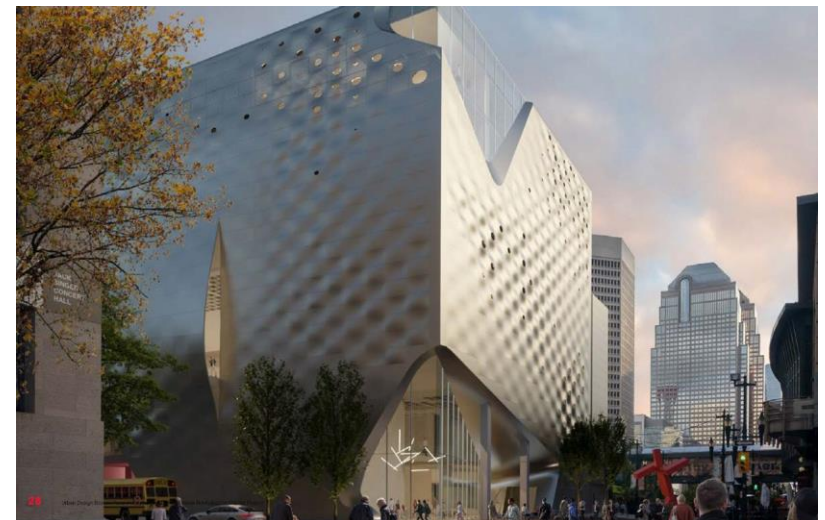
#### Urban Design Elements

Calgary's Municipal Development Plan includes a set of guiding *Urban Design Elements* which contribute to achieving excellent design outcomes by:

- informing city policy,
- establishing urban design expectations on all projects across the city, and
- creating the framework against which urban design aspects of project applications will be measured.

The panel worked with Administration on refinements to the *Urban Design Elements* to clarify their intent and meaning while making them more easily applicable in the evaluation of applications as part of the design review process.

Applicant and Panel feedback has generally been positive.





### 3. OTHER INFORMATION

#### Panel Selection Process

##### **Skills matrix and diversity**

- assists in the selection process for new panel members
- includes professional affiliations and specialized skills
- supports focus on getting to the best balance of skill sets while working to ensure gender balance and diversity over time
- ensures a balance of skills and experience is maintained through staggered terms.

Panel members attended an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion session hosted by the City.

##### **Member selection process**

A more open and public selection process is attracting a broader range of applicants. This will continue to improve the potential to assemble a more diverse and inclusive panel in the future.





### 3. OTHER INFORMATION

#### Panel Selection Process

##### New and outgoing members

The panel welcomed new members Rick Gendron, Jadwiga Kroman and Kathy Oberg in 2021.

Thank you to departing members Ben Bailey, Anna Lawrence and Doug Little for their contributions



### 3. OTHER INFORMATION

#### Considerations for Panel Compensation and Resourcing

- Panel members receive no compensation.
- Workload continues to increase year to year.
- Committees of similar nature (such as Subdivision Development Appeal Board) are compensated, as they require professionals to contribute significant time and add valuable advice to the process.
- Comparable compensation may further improve the quality of potential candidates, thereby improving the value of advice provided by Urban Design Review Panel.
- In light of increasing work volume and anticipated data tracking requests, additional Administration resourcing is recommended.





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## QUESTIONS?

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