

Calgary Planning Commission Comments

On 2022 May 19, Administration presented to Calgary Planning Commission for feedback through a closed, workshop-style session. The presentation outlined a proposed approach to a new land use district to address the shortcomings of R-CG in implementing different housing forms. The workshop generated a thorough conversation on the proposed approach, and Commission members provided feedback.

On 2022 August 4, Administration returned to Calgary Planning Commission to validate what was heard from the May 19 session, to outline the proposed new district and existing district amendments, and how their feedback was incorporated. This session generated a positive discussion from Commission members. Clarifying questions were asked, and additional comments provided.

Themes from 2022 May 19

Commission members commented on the proposal and cited the following themes to express their comments and/or concerns:

1. Concern with making a direct connection between enabling new housing forms and affordability. Enabling new housing forms should be about choice. Why does someone choose to live in a community. Without diversity in housing, some citizens are forced into a built form or community that is not ideal for their needs.
2. Unclear on which is the best approach: providing a new district or amending existing district. Ensure that it is clear what district to use.
3. Supportive of shifting to dwelling unit as the use in the new district, that is ground-oriented, stackable, and has built form outcomes that define the building envelope. However, talking about form-based design and a dwelling unit use may be difficult for some to understand.
4. Parking needs to consider that some Calgarians will require cars to access amenities and services due to age and various physical abilities. The distance to amenities and services is not the only thing that defines accessibility. Generally, Calgary Planning Commission supports reducing parking requirements, however there are varied opinions that include support for a general reduction to having no parking minimums and let the market decide what it needs.
5. Need to address accommodating the waste, recycling, and organics bins.
6. Buildings need to be contextually appropriate with less concentration on units or unit sizes. If the bylaw regulates the form and building envelope, it doesn't matter how many units there are. We need to be inclusive and flexible on unit size, this includes respecting various cultures.
7. Need more flexibility with amenity space with option to combine private and shared space. However, need to ensure that residents have a clear, personal defensible space where they feel ownership and accountability.
8. Encourage tree retention and increase in the tree canopy, including more public trees.
9. Concerns about Fire and emergency access for more dense developments.

10. Encourage reaching out to individual members of Council before returning to Calgary Planning Commission in August.

Themes from 2022 August 4

Commission members validated the feedback noted from the 2022 May 19 session. They noted the following themes to express their comments or concerns about the final proposed new district and amendments to existing districts:

1. Parking is likely to be the contentious issue.
2. Parking and site design will manage the unit count.
3. It is exciting to see that R-CG could become easier to use to allow mid-block development.
4. There is a lot of overlap with the proposed new district and the lower multi-residential districts, including M-CG, M-C1, and M-C2. Suggest review through the renewal of the Land Use Bylaw to delete redundant districts. M-C1 is not a great district and should be deleted.
5. Concern regarding the politics of jumping from R-C2 to the proposed new district, and citizens not wanting an increase in density.
6. The Housing – Ground Oriented district makes sense in the Neighbourhood Connector and Neighbourhood Flex categories within local area plans but ensure that it's only for the Limited scale.
7. Ensure consistent language between “ground” vs “grade” oriented since existing districts use “grade”.
8. General consensus that the work presented is good and addresses the issues identified.