



Urban Design Review Panel Report

MANDATE

To provide independent, professional design advice, from an urban design and architecture perspective, on public and private development and major redevelopment proposals through pre-application enquiries development permit applications and development liaisons on sites citywide with significant impact on the public realm.

COMPOSITION

12 Public Members

ANNUAL UPDATE & KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the past year the panel developed procedures to improve the selection process of panel members. Including a skills matrix and diversity assessment.

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 overtime; and,
- 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 continues to improve the potential to assemble a more diverse and inclusive panel in the future.

The Urban Design Review Panel ensures that design quality is prioritized in the approvals process. The impact of the UDRP is significant and wide-ranging. The Panel comments are distributed to City Staff, Calgary Planning Commission, and Council to inform the approval process. The Panel encourages best practices by identifying areas for improvement to support better design outcomes.

Design quality helps to:

- maintain neighbourhood character.
- promote walkability.
- activate public streets.
- improve main street retail.
- attract tourism.
- foster city pride.
- build social cohesion.



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CHALLENGES

Workload continues to be a challenge. The Panel holds special sessions between regularly scheduled meetings to accommodate the volume of applications. Panel members frequently swap sessions to accommodate individual commitments, conflicts of interest, etc.

WORKPLAN FOR THE NEXT YEAR

Priorities for the Panel for the upcoming year are:

- Collaborate with City Staff to ensure that the quality and consistency of submission package materials continues to improve.
- Develop comment guidelines to ensure that Panel comments are clear, consistent, and proactive to ensure an effective peer review relationship with applicants.
- Request that City Staff deliver Planning and Urban Design staff comments together with applicant packages for review in advance of meetings.

OPERATIONS

The Panel provides comments on development proposals that may have a significant impact on the public realm.

The Panel reviews and comments on:

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

Comments are provided as peer review recommendations.

The Panel comments are distributed to City Staff, Calgary Planning Commission, and Council to inform the approval process.

A summary of the Urban Design Review Panel Operations:

- The Panel meets every 2 weeks
- 1-3 projects are reviewed at each session.
- There are 2 alternating UDRP teams

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

There were 27 UDRP meetings held since May 2022 all of them were remote with the exception of Stephen Avenue Quarter which was held in person at the request of the applicant.



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The estimated time commitment of Panel members is summarized below:

Panel members	~120 hrs
Chairs	~150 hrs
Total	~1500 hrs
Equivalent to (in professional fees)	~\$300,000

The Panel will be resuming in-person meetings beginning in June 2023 at the request of the City.