



Urban Design Review Panel

MANDATE

To provide independent, professional design advice from an urban design and architecture perspective on public and private development as well as 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

2 Alternating Teams comprised of the following professionals (min):

2 -3 Architects

1 Planner

1-2 Landscape Architects

1 Engineer

MEETINGS

The Panel meets every two weeks with two alternating UDRP teams.

In addition to this, special sessions are also scheduled when required to accommodate higher application volumes.

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

The early review of projects is the most effective opportunity to meaningfully impact design quality.

UDRP held 27 meetings between June 2023 and May 2024. These meetings were comprised of 22 regularly scheduled meetings and 5 special sessions.

WORK, IMPACT & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Urban Design Review Panel ensures that design quality is prioritized in the approvals process.

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.

The impact of the UDRP is significant and wide-ranging including increased design quality in the applications that are reviewed by the Panel.



Urban Design Review Panel

Outcomes of increased Design Quality:

- Maintaining and creating neighborhood character
- Promotion of walkability
- Activation of public streets
- Improved main street retail
- Attraction of tourism
- Fostering city pride
- Building community and social cohesion

MANDATE ALIGNMENT

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

UDRP is not an approving body but instead, a Advisory Group with a mandate to help improve and/or peer review projects with an outcome of creating exceptional projects within the City of Calgary.

COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

Interaction and collaboration with other BCC's is limited.

WORKPLAN & PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2025

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. There has been a measurable improvement of the application materials year over year.

Continue to 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.

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, and/or conflicts of interest, etc.



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MEMBER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

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.

Panel Members are assessed by the Co-Chairs with support from City Staff each year during the selection process to ensure the appropriate skill and level of expertise is provided to align with the mandate. Included below is a brief outline of what the Skills Matrix and Diversity objectives are:

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.

BCC COMMENTS

The Time commitment provided by the professionals who volunteer on the Panel is done to support the City of Calgary's evolution and maturation by providing peer review and advice in Urban Design, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Planning and Engineering to applicants and city staff.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. UDRP Presentation to Council – TBD, 2024,