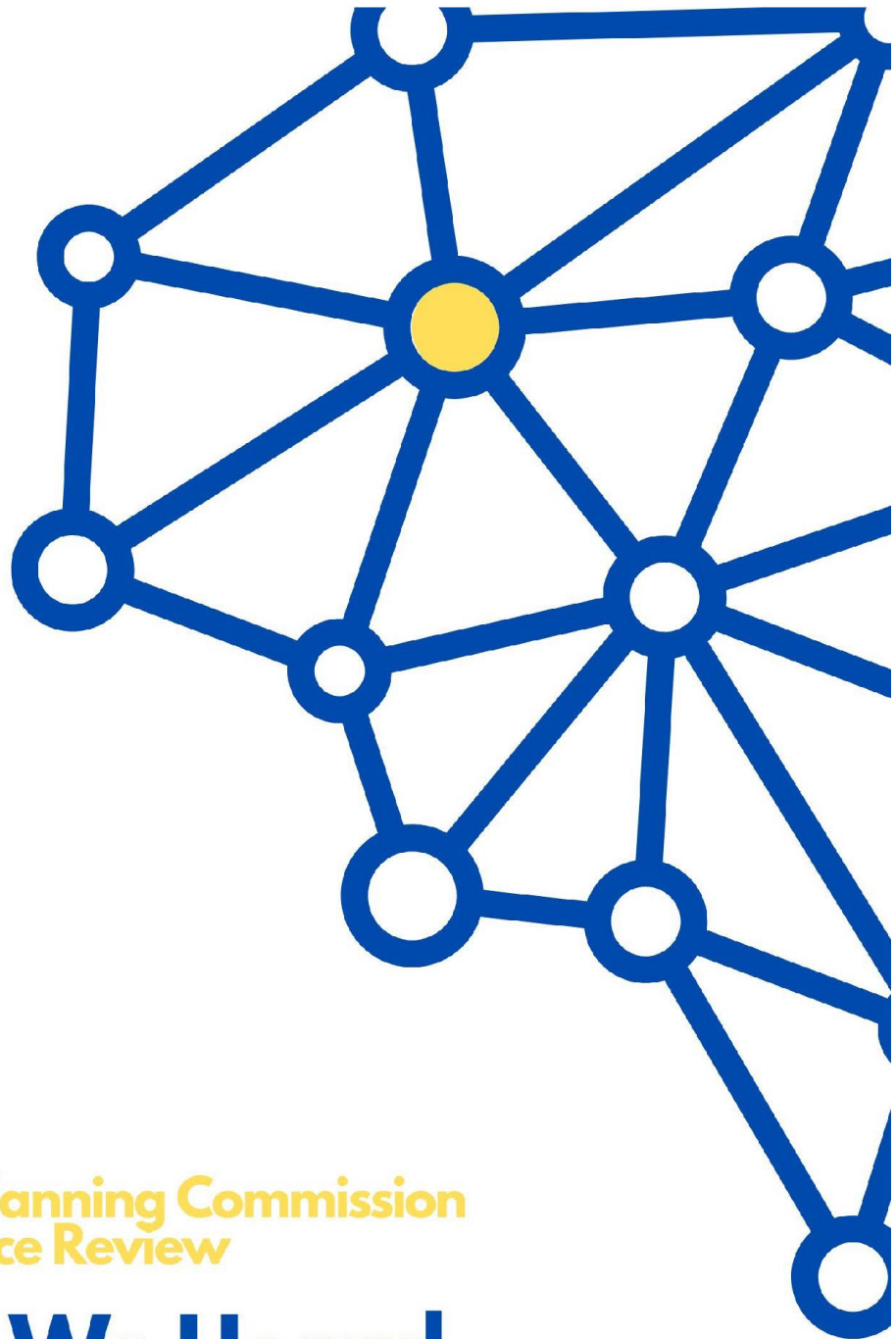


What We Heard Report



**Calgary Planning Commission
Governance Review**

What We Heard

What We Heard

A total of 44 interviews were conducted to inform the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) Governance Review. The interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes each and were conducted virtually between October and December 2023. The interviewees included:

- 13 members of Calgary City Council
- 16 members of the City of Calgary Administration
- 15 community representatives, including current and past members of CPC, as well as experienced applicants and representatives of community associations

Interviewees were invited to share their perspectives, experiences, expectations, and future ambitions for CPC – and were advised that their comments would inform this review but would be presented in an anonymized way to prevent comments and direct quotations from being reasonably attributed to any specific individual.

This **What We Heard** summary makes careful effort to deliver on this commitment of anonymity, while also presenting the comments of interviewees in a fulsome and comprehensive manner. Attention is paid to places where different perspectives emerged between the three groups of interviewees (political, administrative and community – each reflecting approximately one third of the interviewees), as well as where there was clear consensus.

Acknowledgement with gratitude is extended to each interviewee for making time to contribute to this review.

Looking Back: What's worked?

Before examining the current day operations of CPC, interviewees were asked to first look back on the historical contributions of CPC to Calgary's planning process. As more than a century-old institution in Calgary, what is the value-add that explains this longevity? Of course, most interviewees could only comment on the most recent part of this history (the average duration of engagement with CPC among interviewees was 10.75 years).

Most interviewees readily identified positive contributions that CPC has made to the planning process in Calgary. Common phrases¹ included “*adding technical expertise*” to the process, being a “*second set of eyes*” on applications, offering a “*sober second thought*” before applications move forward to Council. Many interviewees identified a specific role that CPC has played, in design and in practice, in terms of elevating the expectations and quality of applications:

- *“When people know their work is going to be publicly scrutinized by others with technical knowledge, it improves the work they put forward.”*
- *“CPC has improved the quality of applications by giving a technical review of applications by peers, in addition to the staff review.”*
- *“CPC is a big hammer. It communicates to applicants that there will be scrutiny and a rigorous level of technical review.”*
- *“The very existence of CPC urges applicants to do better.”*
- *“Sure, sometimes applicants get a tongue-lashing – but it shows other developers that they can't just glide by and put in the bare minimum.”*

¹ Quotes have been edited for clarity and readability, and sometimes to remove content which might reasonably be attributed to a specific individual.

Several interviewees spoke about specific types of expertise that individual CPC members, past and present, have contributed and the value that has brought for specific applications. Others identified steps that have been taken to improve CPC over time, notably including efforts to expand the definition of what constitutes “expertise” to include a wider range of perspectives and the recent shift to a consent agenda format to increase the efficiency of meetings. In the view of many, CPC is – and should always be – in a state of continual improvement and evolution.

Perhaps most importantly, Calgary as a community and city has grown tremendously over the past 113 years– and CPC has played a role in this development. In the words of one interviewee: *“CPC has played an important role in having planned a really good city – one of the best planned cities in Canada. That matters.”*

Looking Back: What hasn’t worked?

Interviewees were also asked to comment on any longstanding, historical challenges with CPC. Are there any lingering, persistent challenges with the CPC model, in design or in practice?

Interviewees raised many different challenges in response to this question, but three main themes emerged – raised by interviewees from political, administrative and community perspectives alike.

Being “Too Political”

First, interviewees expressed concerns with CPC being “*too political.*” For some, the inclusion of Council members on CPC shifted the dynamics away from a technical review into a more politicized discussion. Other spoke about politicization in reference to the (sometimes extensive) lobbying efforts targeted towards members of CPC – or the dynamics that can exist among CPC members themselves, particularly those within the

development industry sitting on CPC and also sometimes as applicants (or close colleagues of applicants). For others, this concern was more ideological: whether CPC had a particular political orientation towards development and growth; whether the appointment process meant that CPC was becoming more of a political extension of Council preferences; or, whether CPC (as a group, and as individual members) engaged in virtue signalling, advocacy and lobbying towards Council.

Time and Effort

Second, it seems well understood that CPC requires a significant investment of time and effort. Members of the City of Calgary Administration spoke often of the hours invested in preparing for, presenting at, and attending CPC meetings – sometimes duplicating efforts already required for going forward to Council. Members of Council who have sat on CPC spoke of the extensive time demands of their Council role, and the challenge of adding CPC. For citizen members who sit on CPC, including those who work in the industry, the time commitment required is also significant. Interviewees also acknowledged the time that CPC adds to the planning process, and the tension this can produce – particularly in periods where there is intense pressure for growth. CPC members are not compensated for their time by the City of Calgary (other than members of Council or Administration, where CPC engagement could be considered a part of their role; and, noting that some citizen members are employed in the development industry where time invested in CPC may be considered part of the role).

The Approval Role

Third, interviewees seemed to share a sense that most of what is presented to CPC is approved by CPC. Varied perspectives about whether this is a positive or negative feature of CPC emerged through the discussions. For some, this was a mark of efficiency. Common approvals reflects the work that is done by applicants and Administration in advance of coming to CPC towards preparing an application that is ready for CPC's

review and meets requirements. Others questioned whether CPC has mostly served as a “*rubber stamp*” for administration’s recommendations (“*is CPC just an extension of the review that already happens with Administration?*”). The very idea of convening a group that includes political, administrative and community representation – as well as new areas of expertise – suggests for some that the CPC process should heighten the level and scope of review beyond the work that happens between the applicant and Administration. In other words, this question about the approval role of CPC is a question of whether CPC has added sufficient value to the planning process when technical review is already taking place within the City of Calgary’s Administration.

Other historical challenges identified by interviewees included the lack of diversity of members, periods of poor attendance or uneven contributions from members, too much time invested in routine matters (with acknowledgement that the shift to a consent agenda has addressed some of this problem), difficulty finding and retaining new members, and general issues with role clarity – for CPC, or for others about CPC.

What is the purpose of CPC?

The *Calgary Planning Commission Bylaw* expressed the duties of CPC – but what do those engaged with CPC see as the most important function of CPC? Interviewees were asked to express the main purpose and contribution of CPC in as few words as possible. The range of answers to this question was wider than anticipated. **Table 1** captures the answers shared by respondents to this question, sorted by the perspective of the interviewee:

Table 1: Summary of Comments on the Purpose of CPC

Political Members of Calgary City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>technical oversight</i>” • “<i>technical review</i>” • “<i>advocacy role to Council</i>” • “<i>bridge between staff and Council</i>”
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<p><i>(including those on CPC and not currently on CPC)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “saves Council time” • “takes debate time out of Council” • “to elevate the planning process” • “non-biased decision-making” • “expert opinion check” • “to give Council advice”
<p>Administrative Staff at the City of Calgary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “technical review” • “reviewing applications for consistency” • “to advise Council” • “a quality assurance device” • “an approval authority” • “to offer technical advice” • “to engage a broader expertise in reviewing applications”
<p>Community Applicants, community associations, citizen members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “to de-politicize planning matters” • “to give the appearance of arms-length decision making” • “to provide alternative points of view” • “to engage experts in shaping our city” • “to improve quality” • “to evaluate staff’s recommendations” • “technical, but more of a professional advisory kind of role than a ‘will the water flow?’ form of technical advice” • “to mediate public and private interests” • “a city building commission” • “to check the Is and cross the Ts on applications • “a fact check” • “to put some distance between the file manager and the decision maker”

- *“to be a public forum for decisions, so the public can see how decisions are made and why”*
- *“to be a backstop for the planners”*
- *“to ensure we are getting the best applications for Calgary”*
- *“I don’t know”*

This simple question proved to be an insightful one. As demonstrated in the chart above, interviewees did not share uniform perspectives – across or within groups – about the central purpose of CPC. Importantly, these different ideas about the core *function* of CPC were often coupled with different ideas about the *form* that CPC should take (who should sit on CPC, what kinds of applications CPC should see, etc.).

Composition of CPC

Interviewees were asked to comment about how well various aspects of CPC function today in practice today, asked: is this something that is going well, or not so well? The following table presents a summary of the responses, sorted into political, administrative and community perspectives. If an interviewee responded with “going well” or some other positive affirmation, the response was coded as “good.” If they said “not so well” or a negative response, it was coded as “poor.” If the response was something in the middle, it was coded as “fair.” This same table and methodology are repeated in several of the following sections.

As identified in **Table 2**, when asked about the current composition of who sits as members of CPC – including the specific perspectives members bring to CPC as representatives of broader groups, the recruitment process, and the diversity of individuals represented – interviewees identified this as an area for improvement.

Table 2: Evaluations of the Composition of CPC Today

	Political	Administrative	Community
Good	0%	13%	0%
Fair	31%	19%	20%
Poor	62%	63%	73%
Don't know / no answer	7%	5%	7%

Three specific concerns were frequently raised. First, the **lack of diversity of members** (specifically gender, ethnicity and age diversity), and at times the lack of diversity of expertise (specific professional groups being underrepresented or lived experience related to the application) was raised as an ongoing issue. In the words of one interviewee, *“for too long, it’s been an old boys club.”* Some interviewees identified that increasing diversity has already been an area of focus, and some improvement has been made – but a more concerted and consistent effort in this area is needed.

Second, **challenges with the recruitment process**, ranging from difficulty finding applicants to the political nature of Council appointments. Experiences with past recruitments were shared, with interviewees from Administration and from Council often sharing how difficult it is to find qualified individuals in the community who are willing to make the extensive time commitment given the busy demands of their professional lives. Finding qualified individuals who also represent a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives is also challenging. Several interviewees felt the recruitment process and/or selection process should be conducted by an external recruiter rather than Calgary City Council.

Third, **concerns about the composition** including City Councillors, members of Administration, and individuals from the development

community who also present at CPC as applicants (or work with or have close relationships with applicants). In all three cases, interviewees identified both positive and negative aspects of membership in CPC:

- **Members of Council**
 - *Positives*: can improve alignment with Council; opportunity for more information sharing between CPC and Council; broadens the discussion and consideration; great vantage point into the broader agenda at the City of Calgary
 - *Negatives*: politicizes CPC; shifts discussions away from technical review; not necessarily technical expertise

- **Members of Administration**
 - *Positives*: high level of technical knowledge; strongest familiarity with the planning process; brings significant resources and insight to discussions
 - *Negatives*: difficult to dissent with recommendations of colleagues; possibly duplicates or increases the influence administration already has over applications; conflict of interest (real or perceived)

- **Members who work in development industry**
 - *Positives*: high level of technical knowledge; ability to increase the range of professional expertise consulted in the review of an application; peer to peer dynamics brought to the review process; higher familiarity with practical dynamics of implementing new developments
 - *Negatives*: can create perceived (or potentially real) conflicts of interest; may be competitive dynamics between members and applicants which either make the approval process much easier or much harder, depending on the dynamics

The question of compensation also came up several times. Some interviewees felt that the time commitment was significant enough to

warrant – or even need – compensation for citizen members. Some postulated that payment may increase the number of interested candidates, improve retention, or address inequities among CPC members. Others were concerned about the large number of groups and committees at the City of Calgary where public members do not receive compensation, and that CPC members are usually drawn from a group of people holding paid professional positions, so there may be less need than with other groups. Several interviewees were aware of the larger efforts to examine remuneration of community members on various City of Calgary bodies.

Contributions from CPC Members

Interviewees were much more positive about the contributions and engagement of CPC members, with many expressions of gratitude for the time invested in this work. Across perspectives, feedback seemed to be that engagement levels are either fair or good. The higher level of non-responses to this question (reflecting individuals who felt they did not have a clear enough vantage point on CPC to comment on this question) is reflected in **Table 3** below.

A few notable positives raised by interviewees included: strong leadership and organization of meetings from the CPC Chair and Administration team supporting the work of CPC; the significant time invested from all members, with recognition that many have demanding workloads and still make time for CPC work; and, a sense that attendance has been an issue at times for CPC but this has been resolved by the consistent attendance from the current CPC membership.

Table 3: Evaluations of the Engagement of CPC Members

	Political	Administrative	Community
Good	23%	44%	33%

Fair	38%	25%	20%
Poor	15%	6%	0%
Don't know / no answer	24%	25%	47%

The only repeated concern raised on this topic was the imbalance that can exist in terms of how much each individual member can contribute, largely due to variation in terms of availability and other demands. Preparing comments after meetings for members of Council, for example, was recognized as a time-consuming expectation that some members have more or less ability to manage in practice. Some interviewees were very concerned about this, others less so. In the words of one interviewee, “I have no sympathy here. If you're too busy, that's OK. Move on and give someone else a chance.”

CPC Meetings

Generally, the operation of CPC meetings received another positive review. Interviewees were asked about the frequency, duration, and general rhythm of CPC meetings, and most agreed that this was working reasonably well.

Table 4: Evaluations of the Operation of CPC Meetings

	Political	Administrative	Community
Good	31%	13%	33%
Fair	31%	50%	20%
Poor	0%	6%	0%
Don't know / no answer	38%	31%	47%

Members of Administration were most likely to raise concerns about the frequency of meetings, usually raising important considerations about the time crunch involved to prepare materials for meetings rather than the meetings themselves. The frequency of meetings can be demanding for everyone engaged with CPC; but, interviewees also shared a clear motivation and understanding of the growth pressures in Calgary and need for as efficient of a process as possible. Long wait times between meetings seemed to most to be a larger problem than the more minor concern about meeting frequency. Finally, the consent agenda format was also raised with very positive comments by several interviewees, reflecting a more efficient meeting structure. Interviewees across perspectives felt this marked a significant improvement, reducing time spent on minor items and providing greater clarity on the process for both applicants and CPC members alike.

Scope of Applications

Interviewees were asked about the scope of applications at CPC. The responses were mixed, as captured in **Table 5**: some felt this was working reasonably well; others felt it was mostly working with a few exceptions; others identified this as an area which needs improvement.

Table 5: Evaluations of the Scope of Applications at CPC

	Political	Administrative	Community
Good	8%	13%	7%
Fair	62%	31%	47%
Poor	15%	19%	33%
Don't know / no answer	15%	37%	13%

There seemed to be a general consensus that CPC offers the most value for more complex projects, particularly where the mix of technical expertise represented at CPC would be needed. Similarly, a common issue raised was “*seeing too many simple applications*” – but with recognition that adding further items to the consent agenda will help address this concern.

Interviewees responded to this question about the scope of applications with a variety of perspectives:

- *“We need to determine what goes to consent and what has a public hearing. The public doesn’t have any idea what it means to be on the consent agenda, and this needs to be known earlier for applicants too.”*
- *“Planning matters should not go to Council as often. Council should increase the delegating authority to CPC, with the ability to make final decisions on basic things. If something shows up on the consent agenda and everyone agrees it is valid, I don’t know why it goes to Council. We should re-evaluate how many things can actually be approved at the development authority stage without coming to Council.”*
- *“Some things don’t need to go to CPC, especially when there are political issues around density. We end up with two projects across the street from one another, and one is approved, and the other is not. Maybe some things should just stay with Administration and not got to CPC.”*
- *“The scope could be reduced. Every land use application goes to CPC, and Administration has to write the reports anyway. Perhaps development permits could be reduced at CPC. It’s hard to say.”*
- *“CPC should no longer review land use or policy amendments and should reduce the number of development approvals that are reviewed.”*

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- *“It’s not working well for outline plans. CPC is the authority but there doesn’t seem to be an appeal process.”*
- *“Certain types of land uses don’t need CPC. There should be some development permits that go to CPC, but not all.”*
- *“This is an area for improvement. There was a fair bit of discussion about the consent agenda as a way to deal with some of these applications, but then it starts to look like a rubber stamp committee. Land use and outline plans should be seen by CPC. In some cases, there should be a cycle through of applications to come back later. We need more rigor around this process of what goes to CPC and what does not.”*
- *“If we change what goes to CPC, it just has to be extremely consistent. It’s tempting to scale back, but it’s very important that we apply equal rigor to plans at all levels.”*

Timing of Applications

Interviewees were asked if applications generally go to CPC at the right time in the process. This is another area interviewees felt was going reasonably well while also noting some opportunities for improvement, as captured in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Evaluations of the Timing of Applications at CPC

	Political	Administrative	Community
Good	15%	6%	7%
Fair	46%	50%	33%

Poor	8%	19%	13%
Don't know / no answer	31%	25%	47%

The most common opportunity for improvement raised was for **major, complex, contentious, or unusual applications to come to CPC earlier in the process** for technical input rather than only when it is ready for a decision – on all application types, with priority for those with unique complexities or characteristics. Members of Administration noted that this has already taken place on a few occasions, yielding useful discussion and feedback for the applicant.

Current members of CPC were also more likely to note that engaging with the more complex and strategic projects is where they felt they as CPC members could add the most value.

- *“If an application has a major impact on city planning or city building, CPC should see it at an earlier stage.”*
- *“This is not working well, especially when complexities are encountered at the tail end where it’s too late in the game and the application has already been in the works for months. If it came in earlier, then there is more of an opportunity to influence.”*
- *“For timing, it really depends on what it is. For Local Area Plans, CPC sees them early and then doesn’t see them again before Council. Some things should go to CPC more than once – like complex local area plans, which should have multiple versions going to CPC.”*
- *“If complex applications came in earlier, it could be more of a collaborative process rather than a show and tell.”*
- *“For some applications, it can be a really long process, negotiating for a year with the landowner – so then it’s hard to make changes. At CPC then it becomes more of a cross examination.”*

Communications & Reports

Interviewees were asked about the communications, information, and reports both used for CPC purposes but also that may emanate from CPC to external bodies or other parties. Generally, this appears to be an area with room for improvements.

Importantly, the source of discontentment was a bit different depending on the perspective of the interviewee. City of Calgary staff often spoke about the report format, including the volume of work associated with preparing CPC reports. Two individuals remarked that there are some conflicts between the City of Calgary’s standardized report format and the CPC style planning guide. While the value of consistency was recognized, the inflexibility sometimes meant that too much information – or less important information – can reduce the impact of the written reports on planning matters. Senior Administrators also noted the volume of time associated with reviewing all the reports while also keeping up with CPC’s biweekly schedule.

Table 7: Evaluations of Communications and Reports

	Political	Administrative	Community
Good	15%	13%	13%
Fair	38%	31%	20%
Poor	15%	19%	27%
Don't know / no answer	32%	27%	40%

Members of Calgary City Council tended to speak more about the comments written by CPC members. Several members spoke very positively about the value of these comments – and a recognition of the

time involved in preparing them: *“I would like to have all members provide comments, but I understand that it is a large time commitment for volunteers. But we don’t have time to re-watch or attend all the meetings. I rely on these comments to understand CPC’s decisions.”* The nature of the comments also came up in the interviews: *“we need to see comments that are objective and not biased, but if they are advocating or justifying decisions then it’s walking on thin ice. Are they truly making a technical decision or promoting themselves as a technical body?”*

For members from the public, the expectations of communications and reports varied most significantly. Some would like shorter, more direct, and more visual report formats (*“more maps and drawings, and I’d like to get to the punch line sooner.”*); others felt there were important pieces of information (specific reference to environmental assessments or other background reports; another interviewee wanted standard variables such as number of schools within Xkm of the site included in reports) that would provide more context and reduce the number of questions raised at CPC.

A few interviewees spoke about the less-visible forms of communications between CPC members or used in the lobbying of CPC members: text message chats, the *“meeting before the meeting.”* It seemed well known that CPC members often hear from applicants in advance of CPC meetings, sometimes for informational or clarification purposes; sometimes this was described as lobbying, aimed to influence the perspectives of CPC in advance of an application being reviewed. The boundaries on what is considered appropriate informal communications seemed undefined to some interviewees, and this may be an opportunity for clarification.

Decision Making Processes

The discussions about decision making were fairly consistent across perspectives: generally, interviewees felt that meetings were well run, the decisions were clearly structured, and the process is working well. This is captured in **Table 8**.

Several people spoke about the value of a strong chair, and specifically how the chairing capabilities of the current CPC chair has improved the flow of meetings.

Table 8: Evaluations of the Decision-Making Process at CPC

	Political	Administrative	Community
Good	15%	19%	7%
Fair	38%	38%	33%
Poor	15%	6%	33%
Don't know / no answer	32%	37%	27%

The reason cited for most interviewees ranking this area as “fair” was question whether CPC's value is really in the decision making vs. discussions and deliberations.

- *“It’s labelled as a debate but it’s not a debate. We go around and ask questions and people make statements and then we vote. I think SDAB and UDRP do this a bit better, where it’s more of a discussion and comprehensive conversation.”*
- *“I’d like to see more robust discussion around the horseshoe, and less rubber stamping.”*
- *“Sometimes we ask a lot of questions, and sometimes there are none. The format and discussion felt different when we changed rooms. So, I guess it varies.”*

Alignment with Council & Other Bodies

Interviewees were asked: **how well are the connections and linkages between CPC and Calgary City Council working? What about CPC and other key groups engaged in the planning process?** Interviewees were asked to comment on these questions, and again the response was mixed as captured in **Table 9**.

Table 9: Evaluations of Alignment Between CPC and Other Bodies

	Political	Administrative	Community
Good	15%	6%	7%
Fair	38%	13%	33%
Poor	15%	25%	13%
Don't know / no answer	32%	56%	47%

A range of specific concerns and opportunities for improvement were cited by interviewees, specific to the intersection between CPC and Council:

- *“There’s a tension there because we use a different lens. CPC makes technical decisions, and Council must look at the broader picture including what constituents are saying. [...] Maybe CPC members and Council members should meet and talk more often. I don’t think there is much of a relationship there, in many cases.” (political perspective)*
- *“Not working. They should leave the politics to us. It’s a purely technical decision for them, and some commissioners are making political decisions.” (political perspective)*

- *“I want to hear more about the ones that are contentious at CPC. I would like to know more about when CPC has trouble approving rather than about the rubber-stamping ones.” (political perspective)*
- *“I know we’re encouraged to write comments, but what’s the point? I don’t think they are really valued by Council. When it goes to Council it just becomes about political views, not the technical stuff.” (community perspective)*
- *“Some Councillors appreciate CPC input, others less so. Perhaps there needs to be better awareness of roles and responsibilities between Council and CPC.” (administrative perspective)*
- *“Going to CPC and Council is a lot of work for staff, between preparing the reports, going through the reviews, doing presentations, and then being grilled by CPC. It has to add value, otherwise it’s just a lot of time spent just doing process. It impacts staff retention. I’ve had exit interviews where the person says they are burned out and taking a job with the same pay but less stress, less workload, and they can work as a planner in another position with the City or outside and not have to go to CPC.” (administrative perspective)*

A few interviewees spoke about other bodies, particularly the Urban Design Review Panel, and opportunities for more information sharing between these groups – but most interviewees focused their comments on the point of intersection with Council.

Future Ambitions: Changes to CPC

Interviewees were asked: ***if you had a magic wand and could make three specific changes to CPC today, what would you change?*** The opportunity to imagine improvements without concern for the practical constraints proved to be a fruitful exercise, generally well over 100 specific ideas shared by interviewees about things they would like to see change at

CPC. The list below captures the ideas that were shared, sorted with those with the highest frequency at the top:

- **Improve the role clarity of CPC, including the scope of work, and clarify the role and relationship between CPC and Council**
 - *“Clearer definition of CPC’s role”*
 - *“It’s not clear what the role of CPC is, so fix that”*
 - *“Shift the role to be less about technical ‘expertise’ and more about city building; add more citizen experts”*
 - *“Take the politics out and get clearer role of CPC to give technical advice”*
 - *“Clearer scope of what goes to CPC and what does not”*

- **Improve the nominations and recruitment process and address the persistent lack of diversity at CPC**
 - *“Not just white men!”*
 - *“Hire an external recruiter to find the right mix of people and perspectives”*
 - *“Increase the pool of applicants with a better recruitment process”*

- **Better information sharing between CPC and Council**
 - *“More frequent comments”*
 - *“Improved comments”*
 - *“Have Clerks document more of the discussion so Council has more insight into discussions at CPC”*
 - *“Better documentation about dissenting opinions”*

- **Remove members of Council and/or Administration from CPC**
(each of these ideas were raised by at least three people)
 - *“Focus just on community members and experts”*
 - *“Less political, less tied to Administration”*

The following ideas were also shared, but less frequently (with bolded items raised by at least three people):

- **Better training or onboarding for CPC**
- **Review CPC compensation**
- **“Ditch the lobbying!”**
- **Expand the consent agenda**
- Have reserve list of members / have multiple panels for CPC
- “Abolish or extremely strip down” / “take as much off the table as possible”
- “Mash up UDRP and CPC – create a stronger body with more teeth”
- Make role more advisory rather than approval authority
- More than 6 citizen members
- No more unnecessary grilling of Administration
- More big picture focus; more emphasis on policy and city building
- Work on bigger files, not small files
- Get engaged earlier in process
- Better public awareness of CPC
- Narrow scope of applications in terms of what CPC does
- Take away CPC’s ability to kill Outline Plans, have them go to Council
- Better messaging to the public
- More members and more meetings
- More meetings so there are fewer items on each meeting
- Address conflicts of interest issue
- Have selection of Chair and Vice Chair be done by CPC as a whole
- More information shared in reports
- Earlier conversations, bigger picture city shaping stuff
- Simplify the reports
- Change the Land Use Bylaw

These ideas represent several opportunities to strengthen CPC, with a focus on greater role clarity and improving composition emerging at the top of the list among this group of interviewees.