

The Federation would like to let you know that a very important statutory document will be considered by Council in December. It is called the Guidebook for Great Communities.

What is the Guidebook?

The City is adopting a new *Guidebook for Great Communities* (GGC) which directs how communities will evolve and grow. The Guidebook is the tool (statutory policy) that sets out guidance and a common understanding of how development will contribute to a great community.

The new Guidebook influences the way that we approach local area planning (i.e., Area Redevelopment Plans also called Local Area Plans (LAPs)). Part of this approach is to establish Multi-Community Local Area Plans that include policies for a group of communities instead of those stand-alone plans, as was the practice in the past. This strategy allows a consistent approach across the places where life and activity occur, that does not always stop at community boundaries. This allows a larger picture of assessing amenities - like parks and schools, infrastructure - like roads and sewer, and shopping or service areas that impact community evolution spanning numerous communities.

The new Guidebook is the first step to creating the urban form categories and helps the LAPs lay down the foundation to create a vision that focuses on the street experience. It provides the tools to capture the key elements (i.e., overlays) within the community, and policies (Chapter 3) to provide best practice on development.

<https://www.calgary.ca/PDA/pd/Documents/Current-studies-and-ongoing-activities/guidebook/developed-areas-guidebook-proposed.pdf>

Why is it Important to You and Your Community?

The Guidebook is the foundation for the future of planning in Calgary. This Guidebook will be a stand-alone statutory document and is an implementation tool for the Municipal Development Plan (MDP). We see this affecting communities in two high level ways:

1. All new and ongoing stand-alone ARPs have been directed to use the new Guidebook. The Guidebook will be the foundation for all new Multi-Community Plans (MCP). Meaning, as your community engages in a multi-community planning process (which replaces the old ARP process), the Guidebook will be the base of policy and your new MCP will outline where and how the elements of the Guidebook will apply.

2. The Guidebook applies to built-out areas outside of Centre City. Built-out means an area that has gone through at least the first stage of development and is no longer actively developing. This does not align to the “developed/developing areas” of the MDP. Specifically, Chapter 3 of the Guidebook will apply to every community in the established area immediately, once approved by Council. Chapter 3 has policies like parking, site design, scale transition, building frontage, building design to name a few. These policies will override any current statutory document in place for your community, for example, your Area Redevelopment Plan.

Timeline:

Guidebook for Great Communities	October	November	December
	Presented at CPC and then PUD set up a “Panel” with Industry and the Federation to review concerns	November 6 – Public Hearing at Planning and Urban Development Committee	December 16 – Public Hearing at Council

What’s Next if the Guidebook is Approved?

1. Once the Guidebook is approved by Council, the next step will be to create the more detailed districts. The Guidebook does not change existing Land Use Districts. Nor does it change the existing Land Use amendment process, which includes Public Hearing and Council decision.
2. Future work to align regulation with the policy will occur, beginning with the low-density residential districts in 2020.
3. Tools to fund amenities are being assessed as part of an ongoing project called 'The Established Areas Growth and Change Strategy'. This project will provide recommendations to Council for final direction and approval in March 2020.
4. A new Calgary Code is scheduled for 2022 and a new land use bylaw will come from the Code.

Other Information:

- The existing low-density districts (RC-1, etc.) will not disappear or be changed on the ground until a new district is created. All the existing land use districts will remain and applications for re-designations will continue and will be processed as normal.
- There is currently a city-wide policy encouraging the retention of heritage properties. Where "heritage" is defined simply as single-detached homes, no tool (now or in the future) will protect that. Homes with potential heritage value have been identified and the Heritage Planning team continues to be circulated on all pertinent applications for their assessment. Future tools and incentive options may be introduced city-wide, but in the interim policies continue to exist.
- Development pressure will exist with or without a local area plan or the Guidebook. There are many factors that have a significantly greater impact on development pressure, such as age of buildings, availability of land, local and global economy, community lifecycle, and market interest.
- Evolution of communities is slow and incremental.

Opportunities for You to Have Your Say:

If you have comments about the Guidebook, here are the opportunities for you to have your say:

1. Call your Councillor
2. Engage in the November 6 Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development (PUD) Meeting by:
 - a. Writing a letter
 - b. Attending and speaking
3. Engage in the Public Hearing at Council on December 16 by:
 - a. Writing a letter
 - b. Attending and speaking

The Federation's Board of Directors will be submitting a letter to PUD with the following two recommendations:

That prior to recommending the Guidebook as a statutory document, Administration be directed to ensure they build a shared vision and understanding of the document with stakeholders through further engagement. Engagement should include testing and information sessions that are properly resourced. The only changes to be made in the Guidebook are to clarify the intent (i.e., simplify and clarify language) and to respond to "testing" concerns. This will ensure that the interest of one group or stakeholder doesn't displace or impact the professional work of City Administration or the overall intent of the Guidebook.

That Administration be directed to articulate a clear engagement process for their statutory work going forward. This will make expectations clear to all stakeholders about when to engage, what type of engagement is required and what the outcomes of the work will be. This is a critical piece in building trust across stakeholders and managing everyone's expectations

In the meantime, we need you to:

- **Learn more by visiting the links.**
- **Engage your community.**
- **Let us know if you engage your Councillor.**
- **Copy us on any letters you send.**

Should you wish to chat with us, please feel free to reach out to our two planners:

- Jennifer (engageinplanning@calgarycommunities.com) or
- Toun (planner1@calgarycommunities.com)

Cheers,

Leslie Evans