

Overview of proposed Guidebook amendments

At the March 22-24, 2021 public hearing on the Guidebook for Great Communities, more than **450 letters** were submitted and **139 citizens voiced** their opinions on the proposed statutory policy document.

Following nearly **18 hours of public submissions**, City Administration was directed to consolidate all citizen comments and the proposed amendments submitted by members of Council — for review and consideration.

The Guidebook will be back for a public hearing at the Planning and Urban Development Committee meeting on May 5, 2021.

Citizen-led amendments have been drafted for the following Guidebook policies:



Local Area Plans



Neighbourhood Connector



Neighbourhood Local



Urban Forest and Parks: Greening the City



Heritage

This document seeks to explain the rationale informing each amendment.

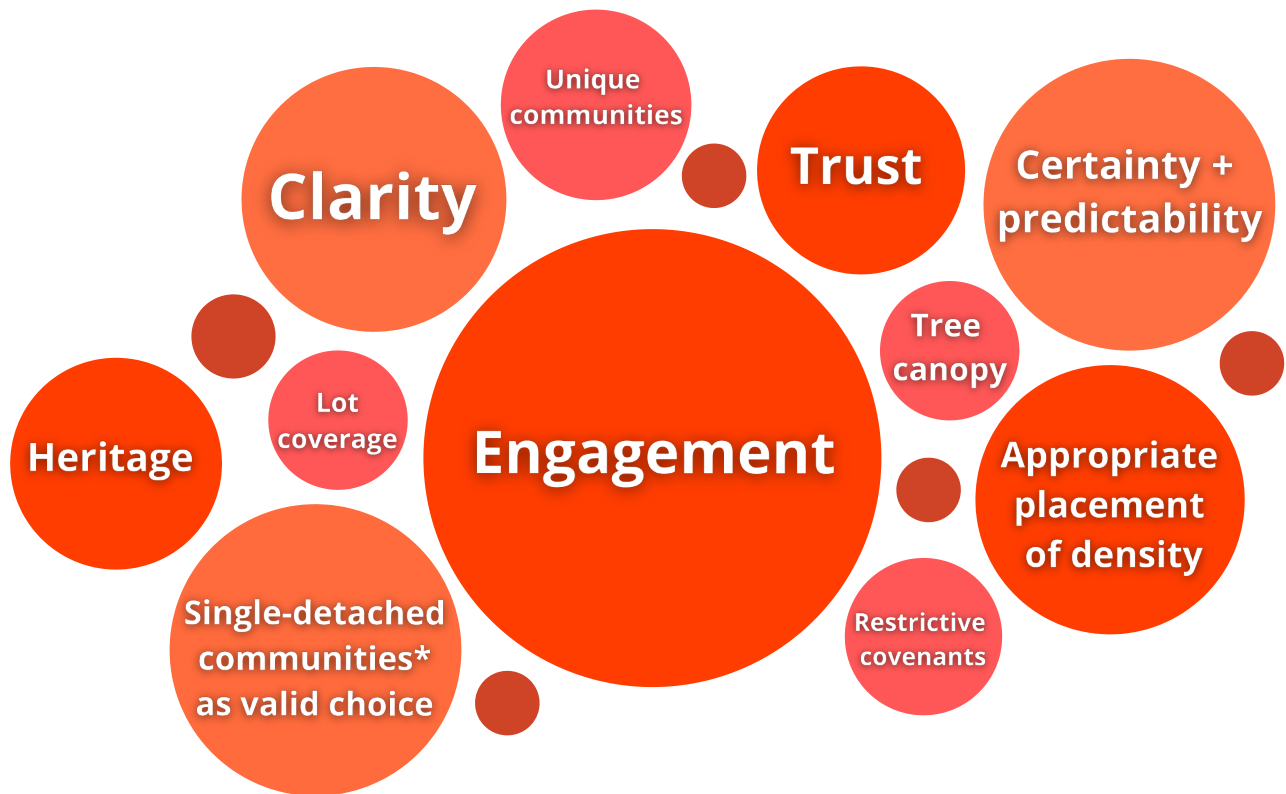
**Support these amendments?
Let your councillor know!**



What we heard

Many Calgarians think their communities are great already and worry the Guidebook will erode what has taken generations to build. Others had just heard of the document and were left scrambling to understand the ambiguous language in the 131-page document.

Public concerns were diverse, personal and thoughtful. We've curated the common themes we heard over the three day hearing.



Each of the forthcoming citizen-led amendments has been crafted in alignment with these themes.

*the elimination of neighbourhoods of single-detached homes is not an issue for all communities, only for R-C1 communities. The issues are different for R-C2 communities and for R-CG communities. Regardless, each of these types of communities are valid choices and none should be eliminated by the Guidebook's blanket approach to densification.

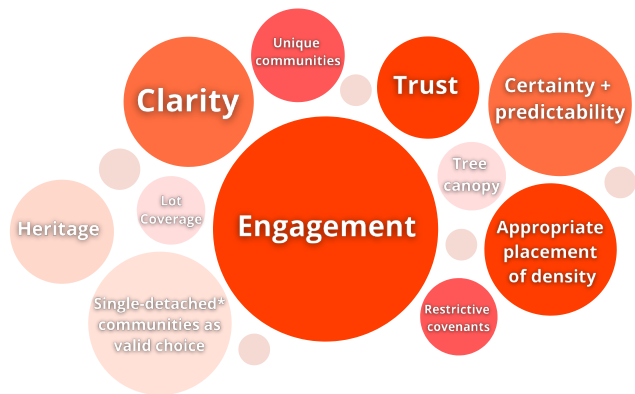


Local Area Plans

Though technically the process of the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan was initiated before the Guidebook was introduced, the experience, outcomes and responses have provided a number of learning opportunities. These lessons should be applied to future and ongoing LAP processes (including the NHCLAP revisions).

The proposed amendments to section 2.2 of the Guidebook draw from those experiences and make recommended changes to improve and strengthen future Local Area Plans and how they are developed.

AMENDMENTS FACILITATE:



KEY DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Using **individual community** statistics to inform the plan for future redevelopment and provide measurable targets.
- 2 Understanding that multi-community plans should include the policies of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the Guidebook in their redevelopment objectives, but each **individual community** will take on different objectives as determined during the LAP process.
- 3 That individual communities develop **individual visions and targets** for their future that will also advance and meet the overall vision of the multi-community plan in meeting the goals and objectives of the MDP.
- 4 The process of the NHCLAP development exposed some issues with residents not feeling properly informed or consulted. The addition of Section 2.2 'd' contains recommendations for how to develop a LAP and ensure, as much as is possible, **resident and relevant stakeholder involvement** and influence to provide for greater support for the finalized plan.

5 Additional amendments seek to reflect a need by citizens to be able to identify and incorporate an adequate number of Urban Form Categories as outlined in intended amendments for section 2.8. These amendments allow the LAP process and final results to provide as much **clarity** and **certainty** to redevelopment possibilities for both industry and residents alike.

It is generally understood that these plans are intended to be “living” documents and will be reviewed and changed as needed in the future.

6 All Local Area Plans should be provided with the opportunity to consider community **character**, specific community **attributes**, environmental objectives, **restrictive covenants**, and other relevant **physical characteristics** in informing the plan to meet the overall vision.

7 During implementation of Local Area Plan where a restrictive covenant may be in conflict with the LAP, the approval of a subdivision or a development permit by the City of Calgary does not relieve the owner/applicant from **compliance with the requirements of the restrictive covenant**.

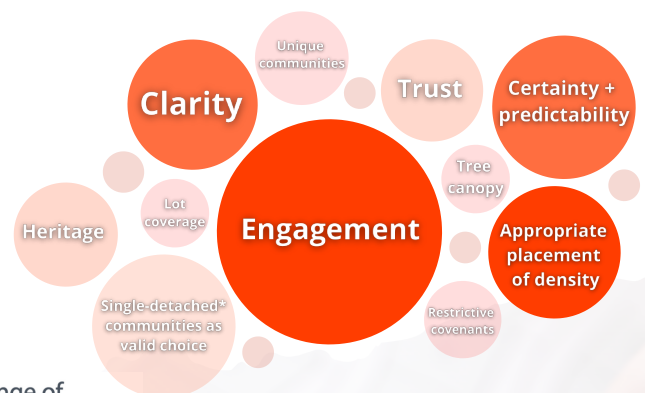


Neighbourhood Connectors

The major concern with Guidebook section 2.7 is the lack of clarity. Most of the discussions we had were people trying to understand what it meant.

Neighbourhood Connector areas are characterized by a broad range of housing types along higher activity streets. These areas may accommodate small-scale commercial uses to meet residents’ daily needs and often provide connections to other communities. The **public realm** may include features such as wide sidewalks and cycling infrastructure.

AMENDMENTS FACILITATE:



The text in the first paragraph defines the intention of a connector:



A “broad range of housing types” and “small scale commercial uses to meet resident’s daily needs” “along “higher activity streets” that “often provide connections to other communities”.

However, the policies do not mention streets and do not mention housing types. "Areas" are the block faces along the streets.

Most residents have a pretty good idea of what higher activity streets are in their community, and where **small scale commercial and higher density housing** make sense along those streets.

KEY DIRECTIONS:

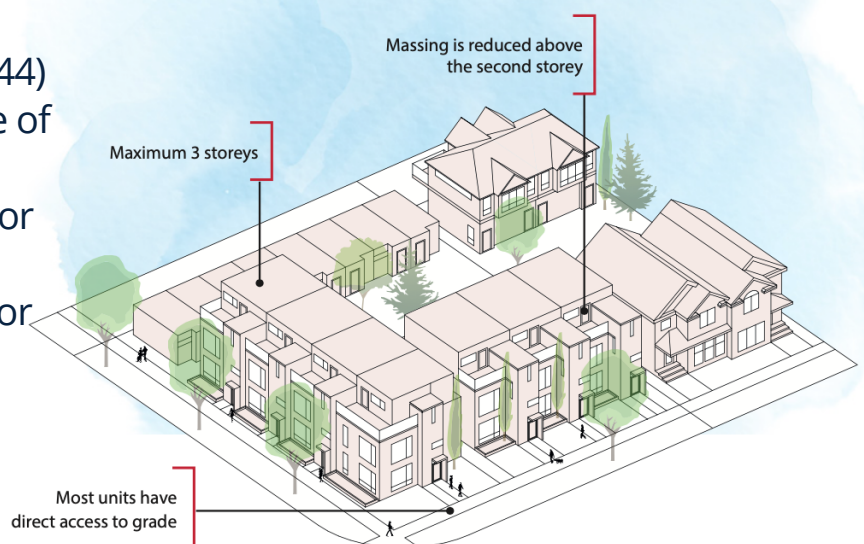
Allow the Local Area Plan process to identify which streets and which blocks are best suited for which type of development.

Connector streets are required to support higher density and commercial uses (p. 42). The Local Area Plan process will determine the range of scale to be used.



Neighbourhood Local

Neighbourhood Local areas (p. 44) are expected to support a range of **low density housing forms** within a height of three storeys or less. However, a scale modifier could increase the height to six or 12 storeys or more.



Limited Scale

Limited Scale accommodates developments that are three storeys or less. This modifier includes a broad range of ground-oriented building forms, including single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhomes, stacked townhomes, mixed-use buildings, commercial and some industrial buildings.

Figure 25: Illustration of Limited Scale Development

For many communities, the Guidebook makes it nearly impossible for properties to qualify for "low" or "moderate" intensity needed to preserve mature neighbourhoods.

KEY DIRECTIONS:

- 1 **Concern:** Blanket mix of housing types in Inner City (Zone A)
Amendment: Add more granularity

The following policy has generated concern from many Calgarians:



Map 1, Zone A Policies

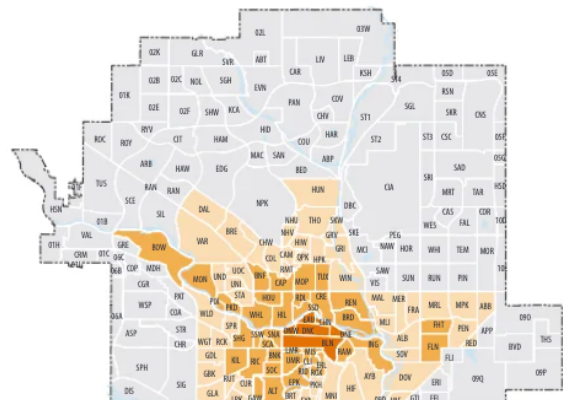
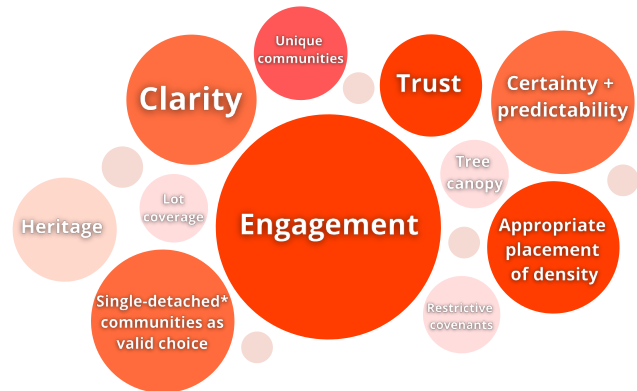
- b. Higher, moderate and lowest intensity, low density residential forms should be supported in all areas in Zone A, except where development meets the criteria in 2.8.d or 2.8.e.

- 2 **Concern:** Map with Zones A and Zone B
Amendment: Zones should be eliminated

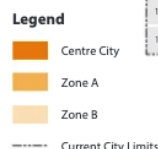
A new concept in the 2021 version of the Guidebook is the division of developed Calgary into zones (p. 47-49):

Focusing higher intensity "residential infill development" in Zone A and B means that these **areas will bear the brunt of indiscriminate densification.**

AMENDMENTS FACILITATE:



Map 1: Zones for Limited Scale Residential Intensity



- 3 Concern:** Residential Intensity (low, moderate, high)
Amendment: Define Residential Intensities in the statutory body of the Guidebook based on Appendix 2

The 2021 Guidebook introduces the concept of higher, moderate, lowest “Limited Scale Residential Intensity.”

The only concrete description of what intensity means is set out in Appendix 2 Table 1 which identifies structure type using current Land Use Bylaw districts.

Appendix 2 is “not statutory”, “may be used to guide conversations”, and “may be amended”. It seems to provide some clarity, but does not provide any certainty.



- 4 Concern:** Neighbourhood character
Amendment: Create a new Residential Intensity, "Conservation Residential Intensity"

The MDP 2.3.2 sets the expectation and policies that existing neighbourhood character should be respected, and local context should be considered.

““ *Respecting and enhancing neighbourhood character*

Objective: Respect and enhance neighbourhood character and vitality.

Activity Centres and Main Streets and other comprehensive redevelopments provide some of the greatest opportunity for positive change. However, significant change can impact adjacent low-density residential neighbourhoods. Attention must be paid to ensuring that



appropriate local context is considered when planning for intensification and redevelopment.

Policies

a. Respect the existing character of low-density residential areas, while still allowing for innovative and creative designs that foster distinctiveness. (p. 41) ”

Conservation Residential Intensity:

This policy has been created to ensure compliance to the Municipal Development Plan Policy 2.3.2 Respecting and Enhancing Neighbourhood Character. It supports **contextually sensitive** redevelopment consistent with existing low density residential forms in mature areas.



- 5 Concern:** Focused redevelopment
Amendment: Sequential planning during the Local Area Plan process

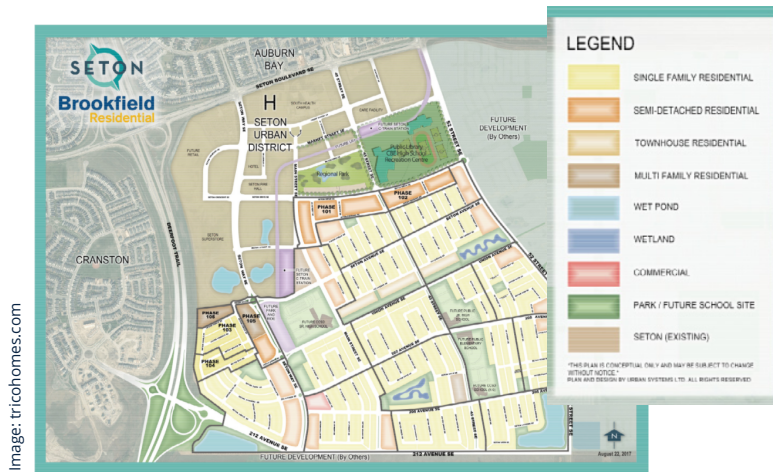
The MDP 2.2.1 (p. 29) states:

Focusing most intensification to defined areas provides more certainty to the development and building industries and makes redevelopment more predictable for existing communities by lessening the impact on stable, low-density areas.

Focused redevelopment applies the practice of **separating areas of different housing types** that is successfully used by the development industry in designing all of Calgary's new subdivisions.

AMENDMENTS FACILITATE:



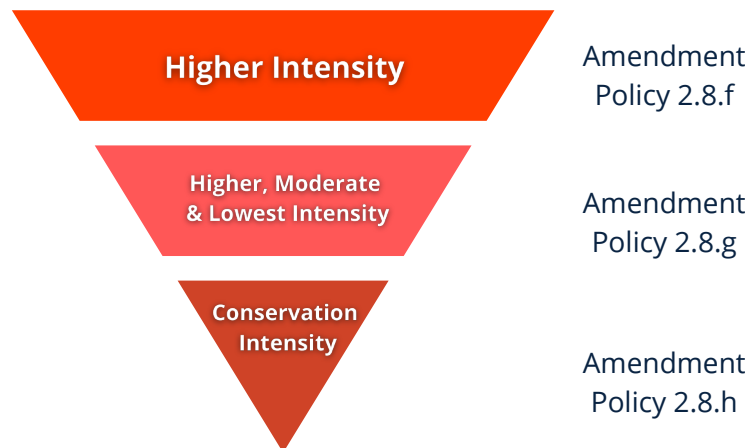


They delineate housing forms to have similar types on each street because that's what buyers want.

Developers DO NOT mix housing types within the same street.

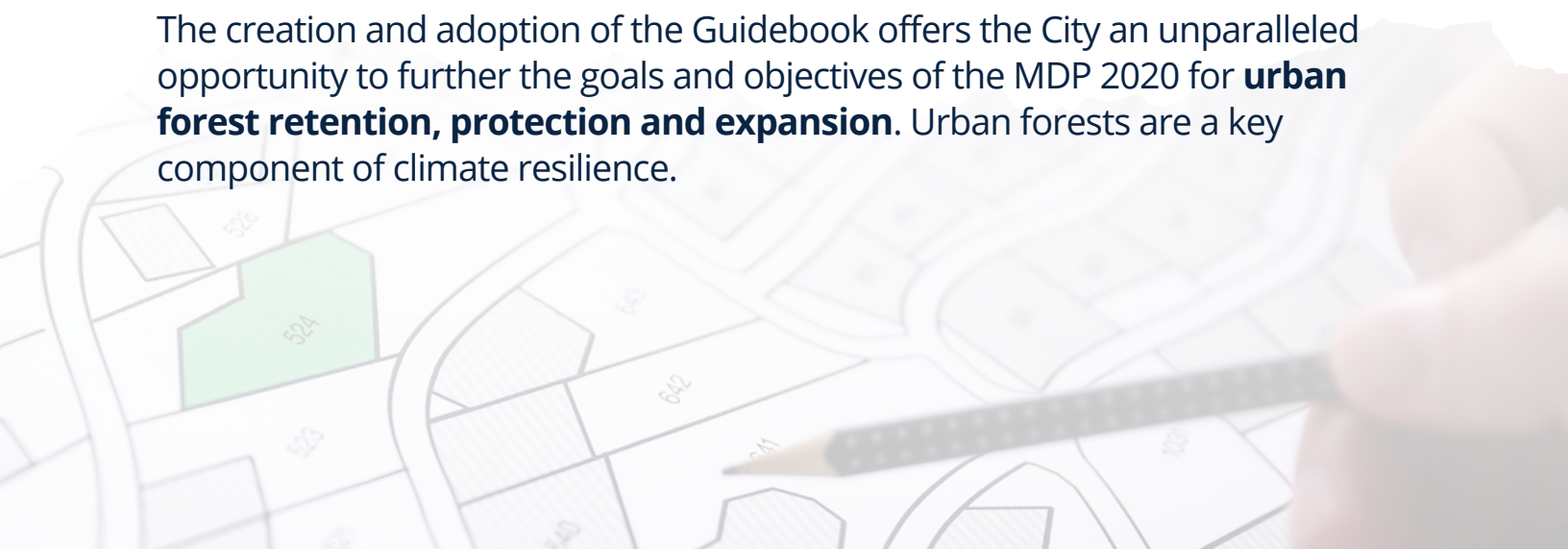
Focused redevelopment can be achieved through sequential planning during the Local Area Plan process.

The LAP process should initially focus on high intensity redevelopment on busier streets and adjacent to Main Streets and Activity Centres.



Urban Forests and Parks: Greening the City

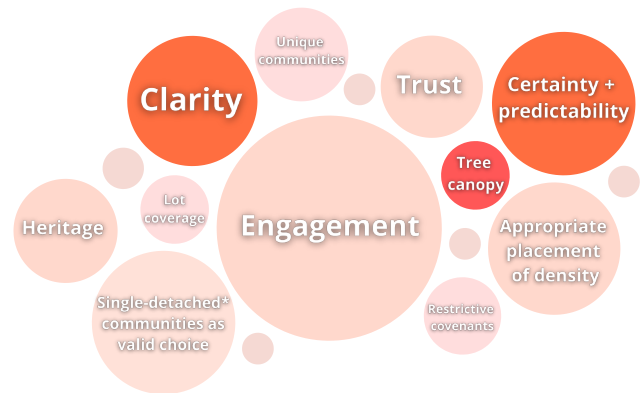
The creation and adoption of the Guidebook offers the City an unparalleled opportunity to further the goals and objectives of the MDP 2020 for **urban forest retention, protection and expansion**. Urban forests are a key component of climate resilience.



The **need for firm guidelines on park space** and natural area retention, redesign, and expansion must reflect a growing population as determined in the MDP 2020.



AMENDMENTS FACILITATE:

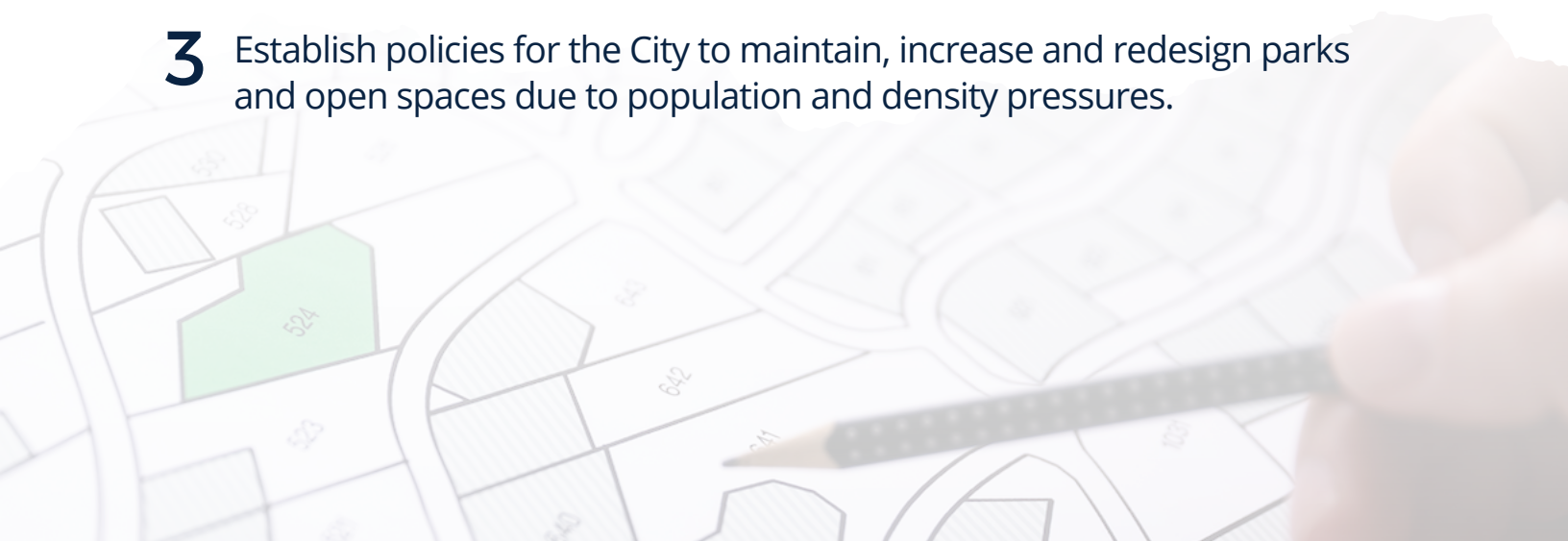


The North Hill Communities Local Area Plan draft (January 2021) includes Section 3.2.4 Greening the City. **This section should be removed from the LAP and placed into the Guidebook** to ensure that all established areas can benefit from objectives and policies that support the direction of the MDP.

Using the basics of Section 3.2.4 from the LAP, the proposed amendment includes additional policies and direction to further strengthen and inform the policies for the Urban Forest and Parks for established areas.

KEY DIRECTIONS:

- 1** Amend the Guidebook to include urban tree canopy policies to reflect direction in the MDP 2020.
- 2** Strengthen policies to support urban tree canopy in redevelopment.
- 3** Establish policies for the City to maintain, increase and redesign parks and open spaces due to population and density pressures.



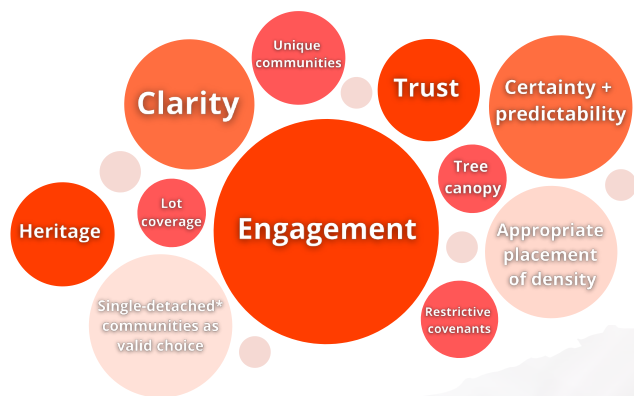


Heritage

Adding density to the inner-city will most likely lead to the tear-down of heritage buildings. The Guidebook's policies enable the definition of guidelines for heritage areas on a blockface (one side of a street between two corners), but it does little to assist with the **retention of heritage buildings** and the low scale nature of heritage areas.

The **heritage area guideline tool** can identify architectural features such as roof-pitch, window patterns, front gables or porches. It will not allow limitations to the number of units, the parcel size or the land use designation (zoning) of land parcels.

AMENDMENTS FACILITATE:



While the policies of the Guidebook favour the upzoning of inner-city communities, the fear is that **developers will be incentivized to demolish** older buildings for profit, replacing heritage assets with new development that has much bigger lot coverage and massing. Heritage located on low-activity collectors streets is particularly at risk.

KEY DIRECTIONS:

- 1** In sections on "Identity and Place," the Guidebook's policies should **respect and enhance neighbourhood character**, not simply "create" great communities, as the Municipal Development Plan (section 2.3.2) indicates.
- 2** **Patterns of streetscape** and **individual community-based policies** must be defined to ensure that Calgary continues to grow and evolve as a mosaic of diverse communities.

3

Guidelines should address **parcel size, lot coverage, maximum height, front and side setbacks.**

A **heritage guideline district tool** should be added to identify areas with heritage value according to the presence of heritage assets and heritage sites.

4



These proposed amendments were prepared by community volunteers and presented to City Administration in one of the engagement workshops following the March 22-24, 202 Council Meeting.

Appreciation goes out to: Mike Read, Terry Wong, Simonetta Acteson, Phil Dack, Patricia McCunn-Miller, Lisa Poole, Zaakir Karim, Melanie Swailes, Andre Chabot, Flora Gillespie, Pat Muir, Linda Cartmell, Margo Coppus, Jo Ann Atkins and Tarra Drevet, Karen Paul (heritage policies).

How you can help

Widespread community effort is required to ensure Council understands how all stakeholders feel about the proposed Guidebook.



May 5, 2021 may be the last opportunity to have a voice in the future direction of the Guidebook.
The public is welcome to speak.



Send a written submission and/or speak at the May 5 Planning and Urban Development (PUD) meeting

Letters must be sent through the City's online portal **by April 28** or they will not be part of the public record.

REGISTER TO SPEAK / SEND WRITTEN SUBMISSION:

forms.calgary.ca/content/forms/af/public/public/public-submission-to-city-clerks.html

Email the mayor and city councillors

SEND TO: Mayor: themayor@calgary.ca
Council: cityclerk@calgary.ca
Council: councillorweb@calgary.ca

Encourage others to sign up to speak

Talk to your neighbours and help raise awareness

Engage on social media