

Why the Guidebook isn't so Great

Concerns about the Guidebook for Great Communities

For more information,

Visit the City of Calgary Guidebook website: <http://calgary.ca/guidebook>

Attend an upcoming City hosted Guidebook 101 session:

- Mar 13: <https://guidebook101-mar13.eventbrite.ca/>
- Mar 16: <https://guidebook101-mar16.eventbrite.ca/>

See what other Calgarians are saying about the Guidebook here: <http://calgaryguidebook.ca>

Main Concerns

1. **The Guidebook does not include a category for single detached homes.** The Urban Form and Scale Categories (page 3) identify the lowest urban form in this document as including up to 3 storeys and up to townhouses or rowhouses. (See illustration on page 5). While R-C1 properties will still exist, and a developer would still need land use approval before building a townhouse development, the Guidebook would provide support for the application.

Source: www.calgary.ca/guidebookfacts

Why isn't there an urban form category for single detached homes? Will entire streets remain single detached homes?

Urban form categories capture the broad range of building types and uses that may generally occur in an area. Neighbourhood Local areas may be predominantly single detached dwellings, but may also include other types of homes such as rowhomes, semi-detached, fourplexes and even apartment buildings mixed in. The Guidebook includes policy encouraging the sensitive integration of new buildings with their surroundings. However, as is the case today, many streets will experience limited or no redevelopment and any redevelopment is initiated by individual property owners.

2. **Lot coverage and loss of trees / greenspaces**
R-C1 properties can have buildings covering 45% of the property, R-G (includes townhouses) allows up to 60%. Existing areas with large trees and greenspaces may lose much of the tree canopy and greenspace. Privacy / overlooking / massing are also concerns (see example page 15).
3. **The lack of contiguous areas of R-C1.** In new greenfield communities, developers delineate types of housing and plan entire blocks of exclusively R-1, or R-2, or other housing forms. They don't mix and match on every block. Many new areas have R-G land use, which allows for a variety of housing forms. (see page 20) However, when developing new communities, a developer will control what will be developed on each lot as they would not be able to sell a single family home without identifying what will be built next door. (pages 18 – 21) They do not have the same concern in an existing community as they have no vested interest in the home next door.

Main Concerns

4. **Definition of “connector” streets.** Greater density is to be placed on connectors, but some communities don’t have housing located directly on the major connectors within their area (example: Brentwood is bounded by major thoroughfares such as John Laurie, Shaganappi, Northland and Crowchild, but none of them have housing directly on them). Therefore the next buildable “main” streets are much smaller, local streets (Northmount, Brisebois, Capri) lined with R-1 houses. Are these suitable for 6-storey or higher buildings? (see pages 22 - 23 for an example of how a Local Area Plan designates the connector streets deemed appropriate for higher density buildings)
5. **The Guidebook would override existing ARPs where density has already been planned.** ARP materials will be “transferred over” into the LAPs, but each community’s carefully planned ARP will be replaced with a multi-community model involving up to a dozen or so communities. While some multi-community planning is welcomed, there is little consideration of the unique features in each community. The Guidebook focuses on how to create great communities but not how to sustain the great communities we already have. Community character considers the pattern of streetscape, architectural details, scale and massing, and natural features that create an “experience” that is recognizable as a sense of place. ARPs captured this in detail that a broader Guidebook cannot.
6. **Density was already planned in many communities for central areas** (Currie, Brentwood TOD, Dalhousie Coop, Stadium Shopping Centre, University District, etc.). Those areas had detailed plans and community engagement and the larger scale projects were planned as the highest areas of redevelopment.
7. **The Guidebook’s division of established communities into Zones A and B**, one of which allows for “reinforcing exclusive and stratified areas” (Zone B) and another (Zone A) that does not, and other communities outside of both zones. This serves to divide communities and the boundaries are subject to change. (see pages 9 and 10). This was only added to the Guidebook in January 2021 so many communities or residents are not aware of this major change.

How do the Urban Form and the Scale Categories work?

Page 28: There are four **Neighbourhood Urban Form** categories –

1. Neighbourhood Commercial
2. Neighbourhood Flex
3. Neighbourhood Connector
4. Neighbourhood Local

Figure 9: Neighbourhood Urban Form Categories

- Neighbourhood Commercial
- Neighbourhood Flex
- Neighbourhood Connector
- Neighbourhood Local



Pages 76 – 77 – Scale Categories



Limited

- Buildings of three storeys or less.
- May limit building mass above the second storey in Neighbourhood Local areas.
- Typically characterized by single-detached, semi-detached, and rowhouse residential development, and small stand-alone commercial or mixed-use buildings.



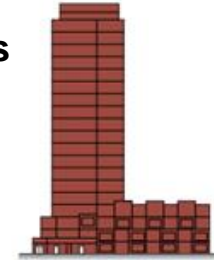
Low

- Buildings of six storeys or less.
- Typically characterized by apartments, stacked townhouses, mixed-use and industrial buildings.



Mid

- Buildings of twelve storeys or less.
- Focus on appropriate street wall height and public realm interface.
- Typically characterized by apartments, offices and mixed-use buildings.



High

- Buildings of twenty-six storeys or less.
- Focus on site design and building massing.
- Typically characterized by tower and podium or point tower buildings.



Highest

- Buildings of twenty-seven storeys or more.
- Focus on site design and building massing.
- Typically characterized by tower and podium or point tower buildings.

Note: the limited is the lowest form and scale, and that includes up to 3 storeys and townhouses.

Neighbourhood Local and Limited Scale

Neighbourhood Local is the lowest density area proposed.

Limited Scale is the lowest “modifier” proposed.

Together they provide the framework for redevelopment in current R-C1 and R-C2 areas.

What does Limited Scale mean?

*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.***

2.23 Limited Scale Policies

a. Development in Limited Scale areas should be three storeys in height or less.

b. Development in Limited Scale areas may limit building mass above the second storey in Neighbourhood Local areas.

(page 78 of the Guidebook)

Neighbourhood Local and Limited Scale

What does Limited Scale look like?

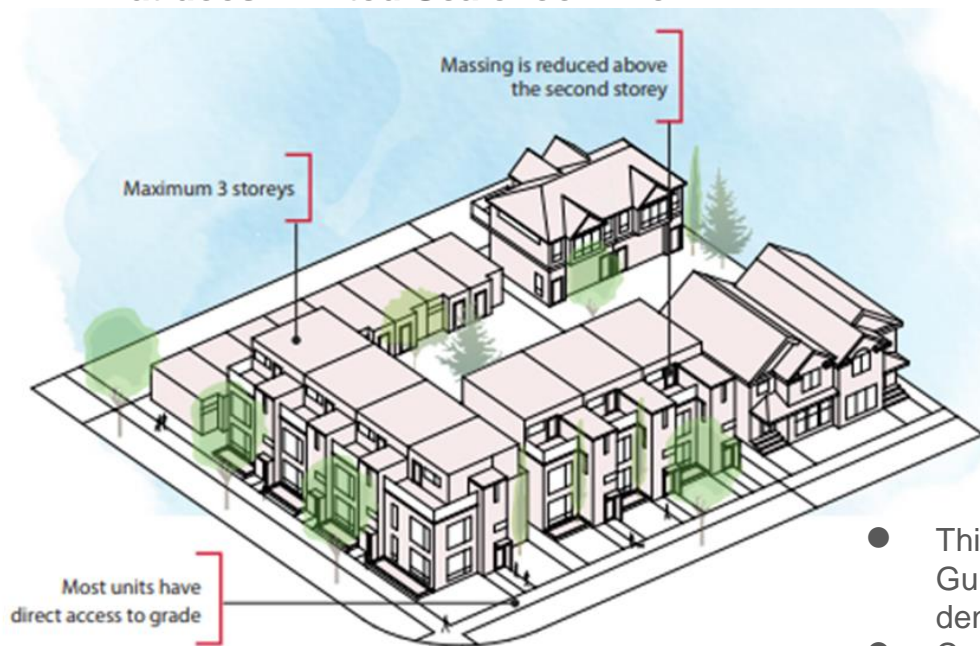


Figure 25: Illustration of Limited Scale Development

- What do you see?
 - Are there any homes that look like current R-C1 forms? Any detached (single-family) homes?
 - Any back alleys or detached garages?
 - Do you see your community represented here?
-
- This is an illustration only, but this is the vision that Guidebook creators have selected for the lowest density areas.
 - Could there still be R-C1 single-family homes within the Neighbourhood Local? Of course, but many other building forms would now be included in the definition of Limited Scale.
 - Rowhouses and townhouses up to 3 storeys would be considered as Limited Scale.

Urban Form Categories and Limited Scale

Figure 14: Neighbourhood Housing Urban Form Categories

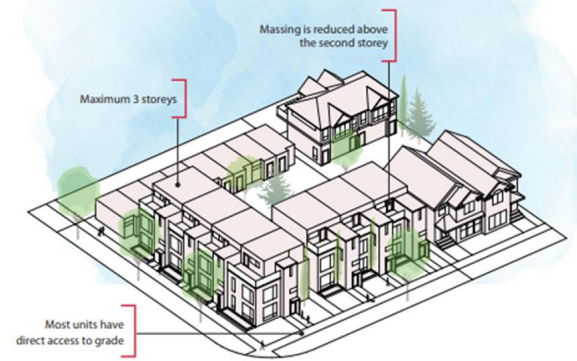
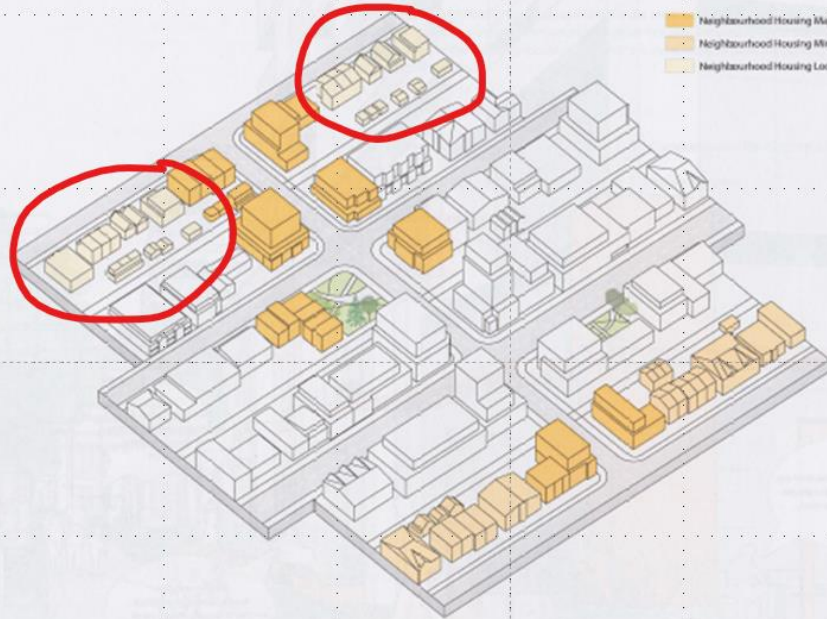


Figure 25: Illustration of Limited Scale Development

- The 2019 version included this illustration (left) of Neighbourhood Housing, including the Local area with what appear to be single family or attached houses, detached garages and low lot coverage percentages.
- The Limited Scale Development illustration (right) shows much higher densification, much greater lot coverage and very different building forms from the original version.
- Illustrations should be amended to reflect single detached housing forms; figure 25 shows only attached homes.

“The policies for Neighbourhood Local, Limited Scale includes a range of housing forms, and notably includes single detached as an option for these communities. We recognize that single detached is an important part of these communities and it will continue to be a housing form that many people will choose in the future. The Neighbourhood Local, Limited Scale Residential Intensity policies support that choice.” **While this is stated, the illustrations do not show this.**

Evolution of the Current Guidebook



There are events from 2015 to 2020 on this engagement.

There are no events from 2021 shown here (although some online events were later held).

The revised Guidebook was released in January 2021.

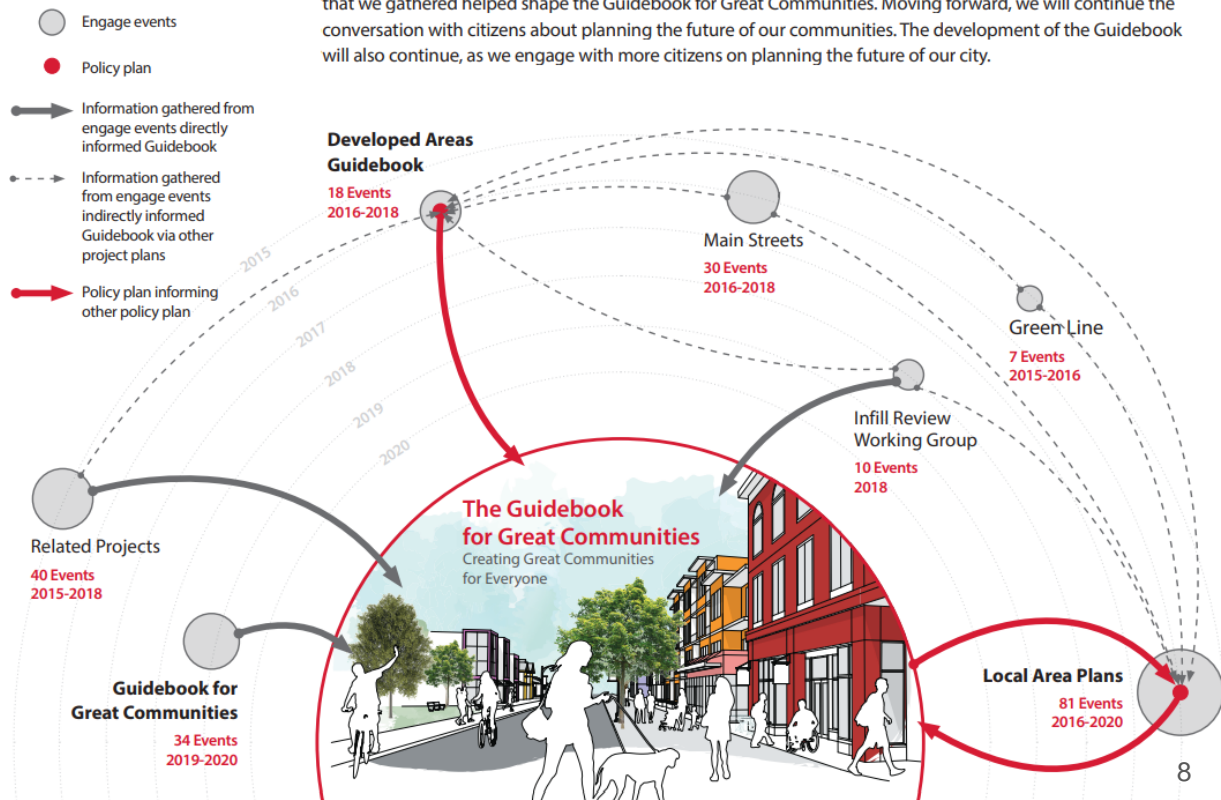
Some changes were made in response to community feedback, which is desirable and the reason that engagements are vital.

However, there were substantial changes, especially to inner city areas, in the January 2021 version. (see next page)

Any participants from all of the sessions shown here would NOT be aware of the changes unless they actively looked for them.

Developing the Guidebook for Great Communities

For the past five years, citizens contributed ideas and perspectives on many planning projects. The information that we gathered helped shape the Guidebook for Great Communities. Moving forward, we will continue the conversation with citizens about planning the future of our communities. The development of the Guidebook will also continue, as we engage with more citizens on planning the future of our city.



Evolution of the Current Guidebook

In January 2021, the following changes were made:

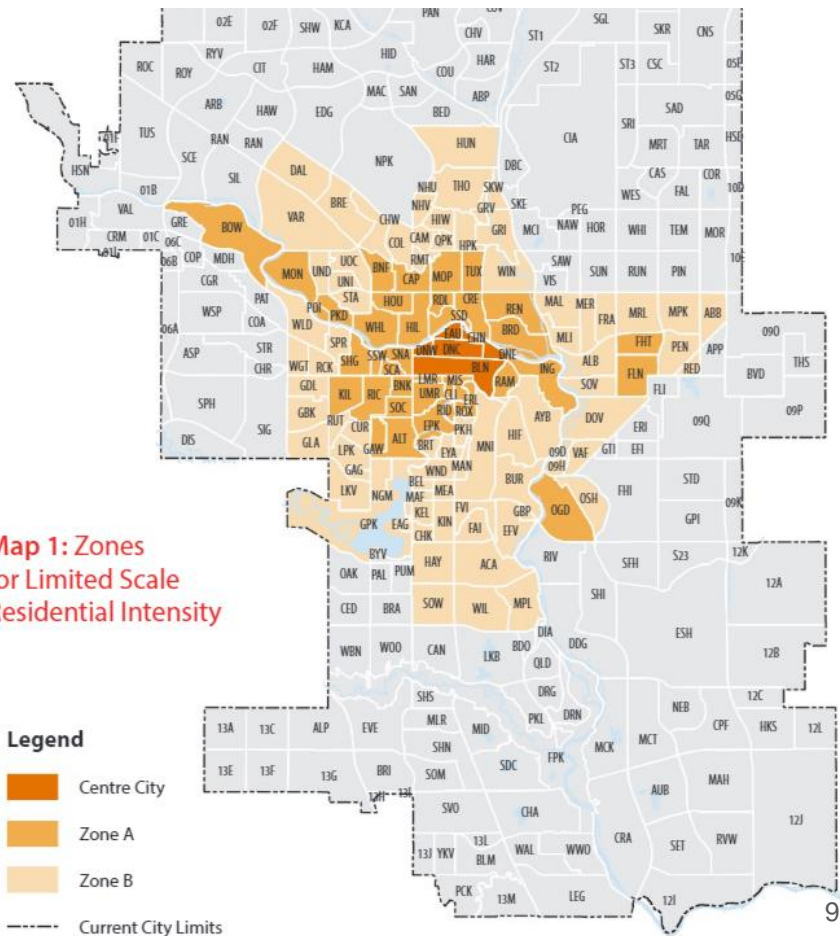
<https://www.calgary.ca/pda/pd/current-studies-and-ongoing-activities/guidebook-for-great-communities.html>

- Simplified the Urban Form Categories (UFC) in Chapter 2
- Moved policies from Chapter 3 to the appropriate UFC section in Chapter 2, so they are in the same place.
- Expanded policies that help preserve Heritage assets
- Added direction to incorporate climate change policy in alignment with Calgary's Climate Resilience Strategy
- Added policy on Low Density Residential to ensure density is in the right place
- Simplified the language so its (SIC) easier to read and gives clearer direction

One of the most significant changes is the addition of Zone A and B, (pages 47 – 49), yet this is mentioned on the Guidebook home page only as “Added policy on Low Density Residential to ensure density is in the right place”.

Map 1 identifies zones with additional policies to guide low density residential forms at different intensities within the Limited Scale modifier.

Zone A and B present the greatest opportunities for residential infill development, which is important in meeting the objectives of the Municipal Development Plan.



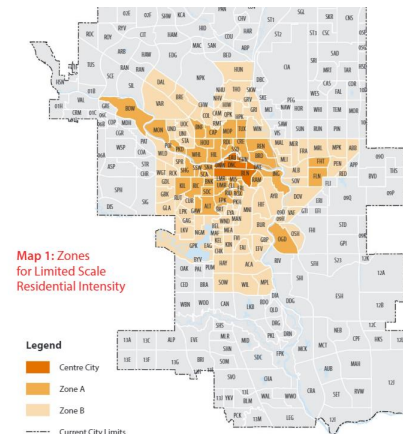
Evolution of the Current Guidebook

Zone A and B (and Remaining Areas) were included only in the January 2021 Guidebook version. Many Community Associations, residents and others involved in previous Engagements would not even know about them.

What difference does it make? An enormous difference.

In A, all intensities (up to townhouses, 3 storeys, etc.) will generally be supported, in B, most will be supported unless they meet constraint categories, and in C, it is far less likely that there will be changes.

Some communities (and some Wards) will experience few changes at all, while applications in others will likely be supported regardless of community or resident feedback.



In Zone A, all intensities of low density residential development are generally supported in areas identified as Limited Scale. However, some areas within Zone A may have restrictions to limit infill to lowest or moderate intensity forms due to the constraints identified in the following policies.

In Zone B, moderate intensity and lowest density residential development is supported in areas identified as Limited Scale, with higher intensity located in strategic areas. However, some areas within Zone B may limit infill to lowest intensity forms due to the constraints identified in the following policies.

Map 1, Remaining Areas

The remaining residential communities within Map 1 are those neighbourhoods that were generally developed after 1970. These areas have a mix of laned and unlaned parcels, modified grid, curvilinear and grid road networks, and typically have more irregular parcel shapes than in Zones A and B. These areas have experienced little or no residential redevelopment to date and generally have a housing stock that is within the first lifecycle with limited pressure to redevelop. These areas are located the furthest from the Centre City and may not experience much pressure for residential redevelopment in the coming decades. Redevelopment to more intense forms should only be pursued in strategic areas.

(Pages 48 – 49 of the Guidebook)

Evolution of the Current Guidebook

**Do Calgarians know and understand the Guidebook?
Is there an awareness of the proposed changes and the processes?**

Source: <https://www.calgary.ca/pda/pd/current-studies-and-ongoing-activities/guidebook-faqs.html?redirect=/guidebookfacts>

“How has the Guidebook team engaged Calgarians?”

Various channels have been used for Guidebook engagement, including advertising in community and industry newsletters and paid social media advertisements on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In addition, City staff have attended community meetings, events and trade shows and provided information and answered questions from individual Calgarians, Councillor offices, City partners and community organizations.

Engagement and outreach on the Guidebook through 2019 and 2020 resulted in over 3,100 direct consultations, plus integrated consultation from ongoing local area plan projects. In 2021 we have launched Guidebook 101 sessions to inform Calgarians about the Guidebook, results of engagement and the work still ahead.”

Covid challenges have made direct engagement understandably either limited or impossible. Everyone understands this. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram reach only some users of those media. Many people still do not know about the Guidebook.

The direct consultations at 3,100 have reached only a small percentage of Calgarians.

A direct mailout included in the property tax notices would have reached each and every property owner, residential or commercial, in the city.

How many people live in “low density”?

(if defined as only single family and duplex homes)

2019 Calgary Population Living in Low Density Residential (Single Family and Duplex)

<https://data.calgary.ca/Demographics/Civic-Census-by-Ward-and-Dwelling-Structure/yr3w-mcsu>

Across all 14 wards, in 2019, there are 321,895 low density dwellings (defined here as single family and duplex homes).

929,000 people live in that form of housing, making single family and duplex housing the dominant housing form of choice for 72% of all Calgarians.

There were 3,100 direct consultations on the Guidebook.

Ward	Low Density Dwellings	# of Residents
1	25022	71361
2	23842	74678
3	19207	60594
4	28482	74860
5	20156	73955
6	23640	70541
7	17098	40023
8	13635	32540
9	21818	56640
10	23003	72001
11	23661	58825
12	28968	88857
13	25186	74748
14	28177	79377
Total	321895	929000
2019 Total Population		1,285,711



What We're Shopping For

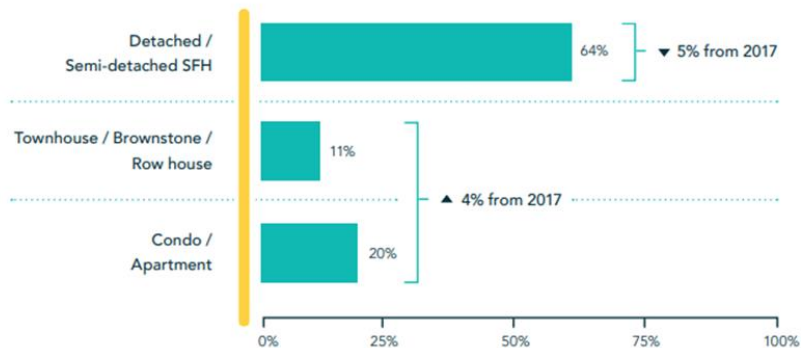
WE STILL LIKE TO LIVE IN SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

Despite the trepidation with which Calgarians approach the housing market, stable demographic trends can be seen. Families, especially those with kids, tend to favour single-family homes (SFH), while 38% of those under the age of 35 currently live in condos or apartments. Overall, 64% of buyers are looking for single-family homes (detached or semi-detached), 11% are interested in townhouses/brownstones and 20% in condos.

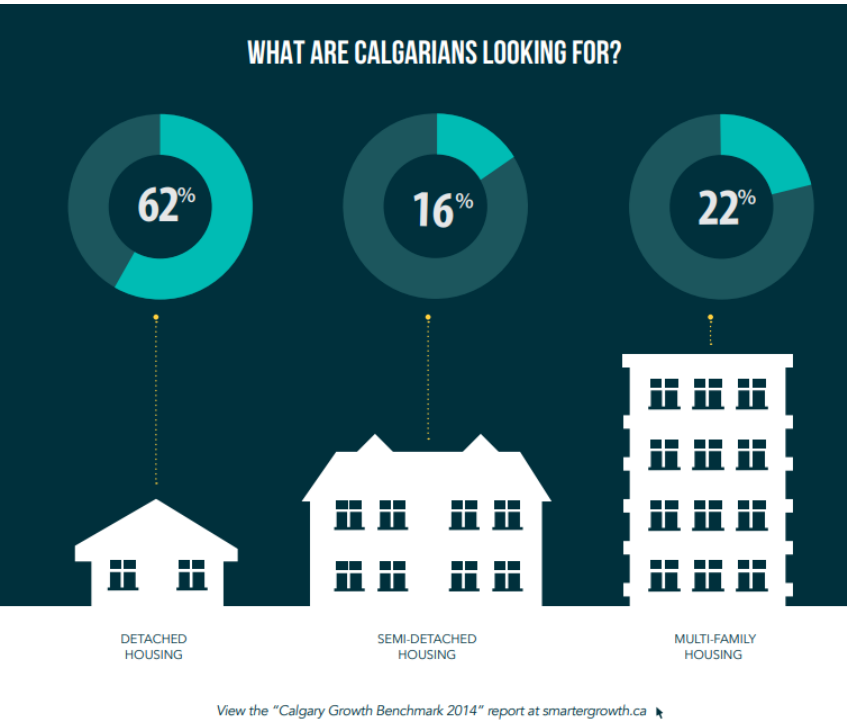
Since 2016, the southeast has gained 8 percentage points as a favoured location. The north-west has declined 14 points.



Likely housing type



The Smarter Growth Initiative, a collaboration between the Urban Development Institute – Calgary and the Canadian Home Builders' Association – Calgary Region



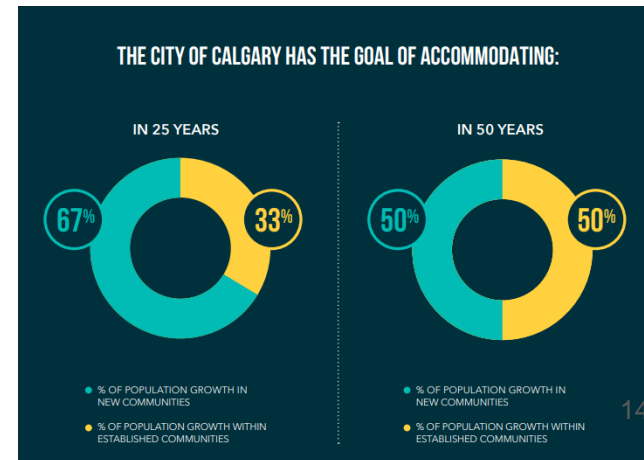
Source: the Smarter Growth Initiative, a collaboration between the Urban Development Institute – Calgary and the Canadian Home Builders' Association – Calgary Region.

Why do so many Calgarians prefer a "Single Family" home?

Space, privacy, yards and gardens, room for large trees or plantings, and others

Traditionally, a "single-family neighbourhood" (one in which R-C1 is the predominant or often only housing form) had similar housing forms on the same street or within larger areas.

The Guidebook would allow for R-G land uses within the same areas. Homeowners may be surprised when R-G uses are proposed next to them. (See next page)

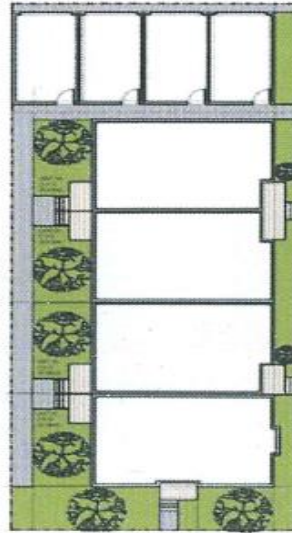
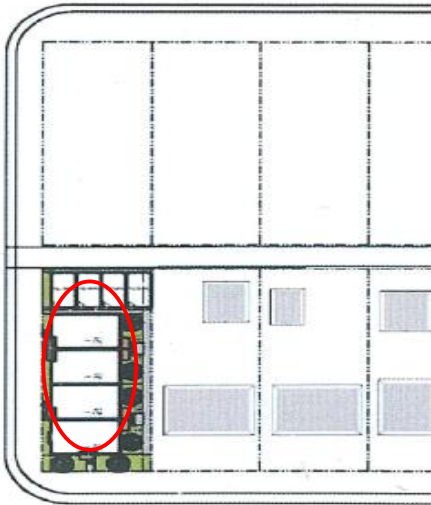


R-G – the Reality from the Ground

This property previously had one home with a detached garage.

A townhouse with 4 units was built, and each unit has a secondary suite, making a total of 8 units on this property.

- The adjacent home now has 4 sets of windows overlooking his backyard. Privacy has been lost.
- The lot coverage for R-C1 is 45% but for R-G it is 60%.
- There is no space left behind the new dwelling unit to ever plant trees to mitigate massing or overlooking.
- There will be 12 sets of garbage and recycle bins in the back alley. There is no space for them in the garage or on the property itself.



Redevelopment - the Reality from the Ground

Not all redevelopment is sensitive to existing buildings or homes.
Not all change has been incremental.



What about large-scale developments?

- There are large scale proposals for projects within established areas throughout the city. For example, Stadium shopping centre, Midfield Park, Currie, Oakridge Coop, Brentwood TOD area, Dalhousie Coop, University District, Victoria Park Entertainment District, East Village and others.
- Many of those projects have towers in the centre of the site and townhouses or rowhouses as the transition to the adjacent low-density area.
- If piecemeal building occurs within the community, rather than at the proposed larger sites, will the larger projects proceed? Are we jeopardizing some of the large-scale redevelopments?

Stadium Shopping Centre



Dalhousie Coop Shopping Centre



How do Builders Plan New Communities?

- Developers / Builders spend a lot of time, money, energy targeting their market and to do so, they have to provide a product that they know will sell. They have to give people what they want in a community or they can't sell their houses.
- Location, location, location, but in the sense of not just which community, but exactly where in the community; on which street?
- Developers provide a range of prices, housing forms, etc., and they **delineate** them because they know the first question a purchaser of an empty lot is going to ask is, "what's going to be built next to me?"
- The various types of housing – SFH, duplex, townhouses are all on separate streets and similar ones are grouped together.
- Developers include **contiguous** housing on streets; they do not mix it all into every street.

Why is it different in Established Communities?

- Developers / Builders are not trying to sell the adjacent properties: residents already live in existing homes in the community.
- Buying an existing home (or several adjacent homes) and redeveloping them means they only have to sell that particular project (townhouse, tower, or whatever form it takes, it is still one project).
- Neighbours to the site have to consider the impacts on their property (shadowing, massing, overlooking, loss of trees or greenery, parking, etc.) but they are already invested in their property so they have a harder time moving or making a change.
- Residents are often upset that the developer proposes a project that is out of scale with their existing neighbourhood, and the developer has no stake in the community.
- In a new community, residents know what they are buying into; in an established area, they do not know what a developer may propose for a site.
- Zoning (Land Use) is the means to regulate what can or cannot be built on a property. Residents who purchased R-C1 properties may assume that only single-family houses are allowed, but a rezoning application may substantially change what can be built.
- R-G Land Use is very different from R-C1.

What is R-G Land Use?

- Residential - Low Density Mixed Housing (R-G)
- The R-G district is for a mix of low density housing forms in suburban greenfield locations, including single-detached, side by side, duplex , cottage housing clusters and rowhouse development, all of which may include secondary suite.
- In newer areas, some parcels of residential land have R-G Land Use, which allows the builder / developer greater flexibility in what can be built on a property. They could build a single-detached next to a townhouse, for example.
- Example: Seton. Most properties are R-G which would allow for the above housing form mix. However.....

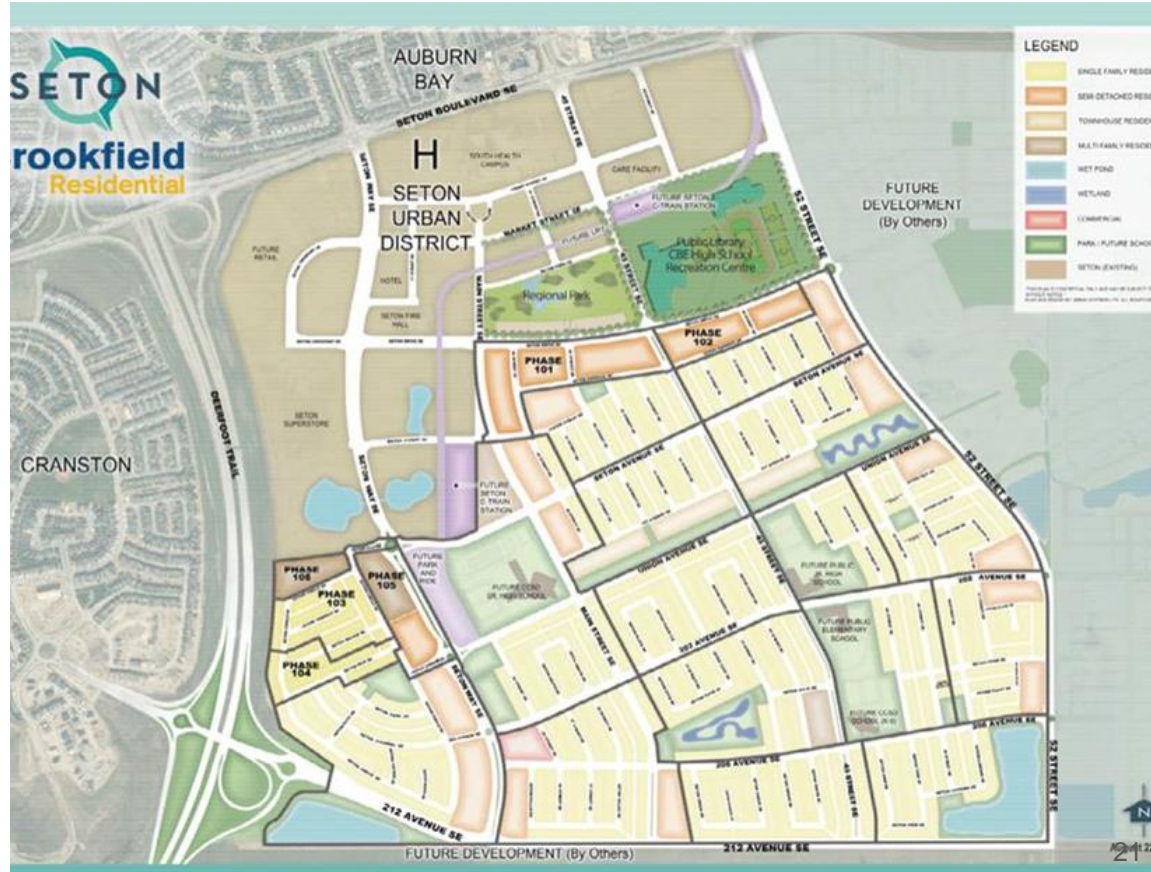
Housing Delineation in New Communities

The map shows clear delineations of Single Family, Semi-Detached, Townhouse..... each in separate areas throughout the community.

The buyers of these new areas want certainty and the builders provide it.

This is what the Guidebook fails to provide in existing communities. By defining low density as up to 3 storeys and townhouse or rowhouse build forms, it lumps all the various housing types together at the expense of existing homeowners in the community.

Established Areas should have the right to the same delineation of housing forms in contiguous areas.



How does all this apply in a community?

Each community will become part of a Local Area Plan along with other adjacent communities.

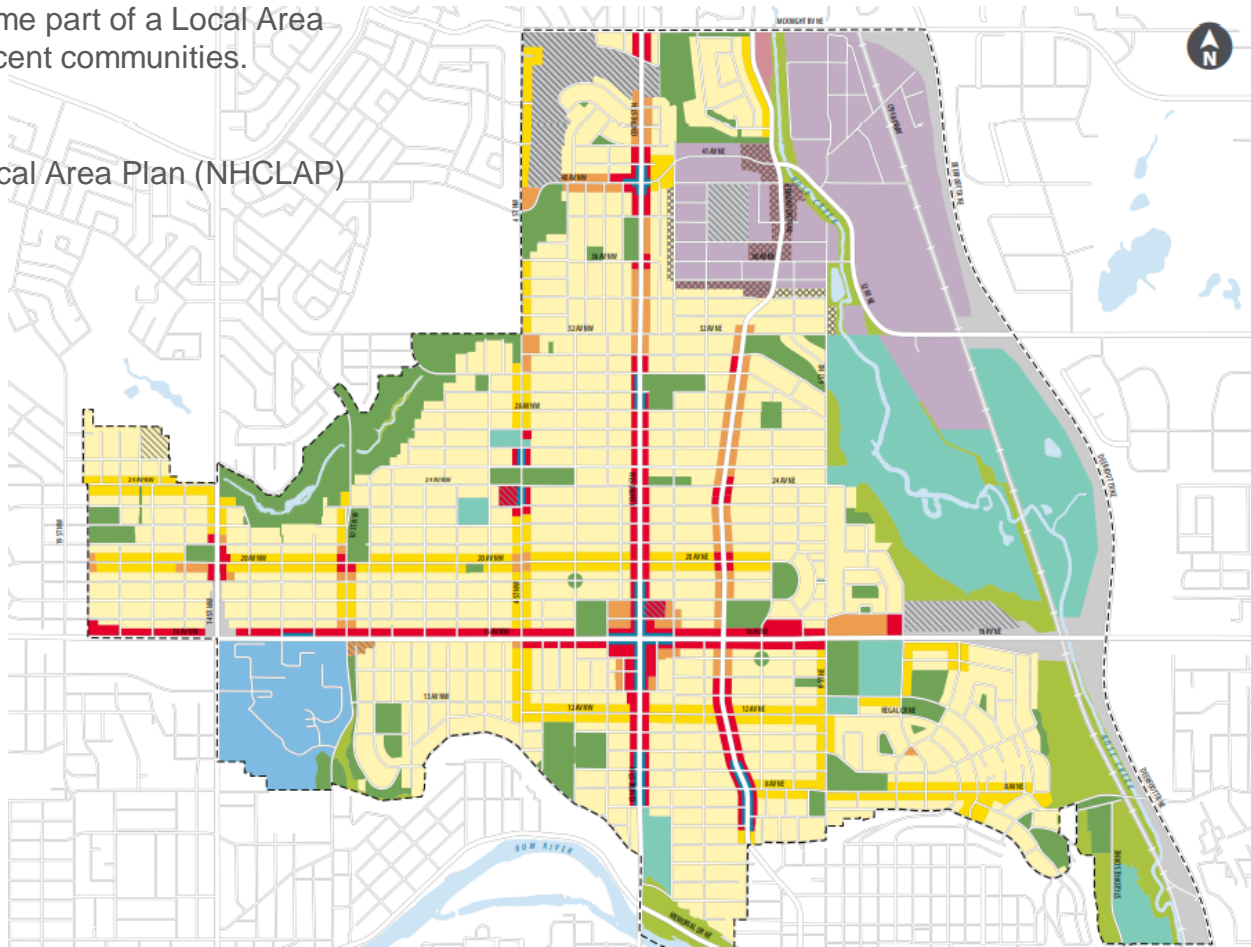
Example:

North Hill Communities Local Area Plan (NHCLAP)

Legend

Urban Form Categories

- Neighbourhood Commercial
- Neighbourhood Flex
- Neighbourhood Connector
- Neighbourhood Local
- Commercial Corridor
- Industrial General
- Natural Areas
- Parks and Open Space



Map 3
Urban Form

Legend

Urban Form Categories

- Neighbourhood Commercial
- Neighbourhood Flex
- Neighbourhood Connector
- Neighbourhood Local
- Commercial Corridor
- Industrial General
- Natural Areas
- Parks and Open Space
- City Civic and Recreation
- Regional Campus
- No Urban Form Category

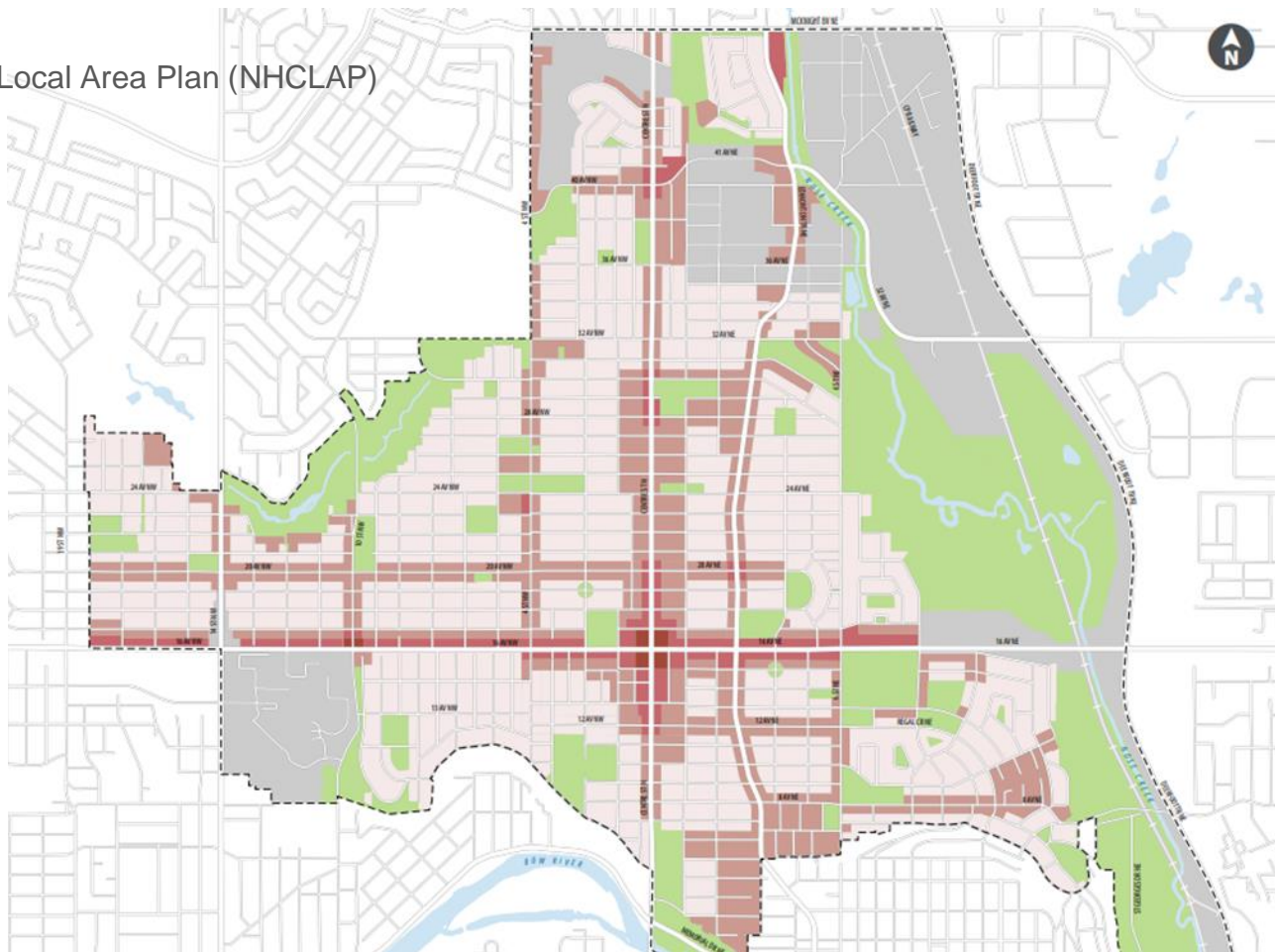
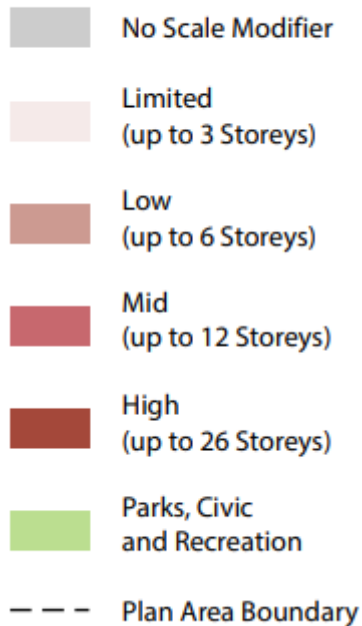
Additional Policy Guidance

- Active Frontage
- Comprehensive Planning Site
- Industrial Transition
- Plan Area Boundary

How does all this apply in a community?

Example:
North Hill Communities Local Area Plan (NHCLAP)

Legend



Map 4:
Building Scale



Concerned?

The Guidebook is scheduled for a Public Hearing and a vote at Council on March 22, 2021. If you have concerns about future development in your community, now is the time to tell the Mayor and City Council to pause and look at amendments BEFORE it passes.

What can You do?

- **CALL** Ward 4 Councillor Sean Chu 403-268-3727
- **EMAIL** ward04@calgary.ca
- Please copy the BCA on any correspondence office@brentwoodcommunity.com
- **WRITE** a submission before the hearing: <http://calgary.ca/publicsubmission> by **March 15th at noon** - to be included in the Councillors' package delivered by the end of the week
Until March 22nd - you can send an email to: publicsubmissions@calgary.ca
written submissions can be sent in, but they may not be included in the minutes of the meeting (for the public record)
- **EMAIL** all councillors at councillorweb@calgary.ca (redistributed to all councillors)
- **EMAIL** the Mayor at themayor@calgary.ca
- Make sure your neighbours are aware!
- REGISTER to SPEAK with the City Clerks Office <https://www.calgary.ca/ca/city-clerks/get-involved-with-city-council.html>