

DATE: Wednesday, June 3, 2026

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Microsoft Teams Meeting

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Peeraj Thakre (Chair)
Ana Maria Llanos
Grant Brumpton
Jon Stovell
Mariyeh Sharifisaraei
Nic Besseling
Scott Mitchell
Tony Osborn
Tracey Mactavish

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. City-wide Design and Development Guidelines (CDDG) – Non Voting Session

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Chair Peeroj Thakre called the meeting to order at 3:04pm. The panel then considered the item as scheduled for presentation.

1. Item: City-wide Design and Development Guidelines (CDDG)
Description: The City of Vancouver is developing the City-wide Design and Development Guidelines (CDDG), a new consolidated urban design guidance framework intended to streamline and modernize the City's existing design guidelines. The CDDG consolidate and simplify a large number of existing urban design guideline documents into a more accessible and coordinated city-wide framework intended to support clearer expectations, improved usability, and more consistent urban design outcomes.
This session will present the final draft of the CDDG in advance of the planned Council consideration on July 22, 2026, including an overview of the framework's structure, scope, and key urban design directions related to site organization, building design, livability, public realm design, and broader city-building objectives.
Application Status: Non-voting workshop
Review: First
Staff: Kevin Spaans, Sara Zonouzi

EVALUATION: NON-VOTING

Item Introduction:

Sara Zonouzi, City Design Studio Community Planner, gave an introduction of City-wide Design and Development Guidelines (CDDG), including an overview of the intent and structure of the document. The presentation included a walk-through of the chapters, examples of how guidelines are organized and applied, and an explanation of applicability across development types and areas. Implementation considerations were also outlined, including timelines, rollout, and future updates.

Staff noted that engagement to date has included targeted outreach to community and industry representatives, consultation with UDI, and a Public Information Session. It was noted that more focused engagement will continue for new policy content, and that future phases, including area plans not included in the current stage, may require additional engagement.

The presentation also introduced the concept of Development Playbooks as a supplementary tool, illustrating possible development typologies and metrics to support rezoning and development applications.

Following the presentation, panelists directed questions to staff and provided commentary

Summary of Panel Commentary:

The panel expressed strong overall support for the initiative of City-wide Design and Development Guidelines to consolidate the overwhelming legacy documents into a single, clearer framework. The effort to streamline and simplify guidance was widely appreciated and seen as beneficial to practitioners and applicants.

The panel emphasized that while the concept is well supported, a full review of the draft document is necessary to provide detailed and meaningful feedback. Members look forward to reviewing the detailed language, structure, and content once available.

The panel noted that clarity of language will be critical to the success of the guidelines. Particular attention should be given to eliminating vague or subjective terms and ensuring that expectations are clearly defined to avoid inconsistent interpretation.

There was strong emphasis on the importance of consistency and predictability in how the guidelines are applied. The panel highlighted the need to avoid informal or “hidden” interpretations and ensure that all expectations are transparent and consistently enforced across staff and projects.

The panel stressed the importance of comprehensive training for staff, advisory bodies, and industry professionals. Training should focus on establishing a shared understanding of how guidelines are interpreted and applied and should help prevent the gradual reintroduction of inconsistent practices over time.

The panel noted that clear communication and accessibility of information will be essential, particularly during implementation. This includes clearly identifying which legacy documents are repealed, ensuring outdated materials are removed, and maintaining a single reliable source for current guidelines.

The panel encouraged further consideration of how the CDDG interfaces with other policies and regulatory layers. Tools such as flowcharts or cross-referencing materials would help users understand how different policies, bylaws, and guidelines interact.

There was interest in understanding how the new guidelines differ from existing ones. The panel suggested that providing a summary of key changes, or an indication of areas where guidance is more or less flexible, would help practitioners transition from legacy documents.

The panel supported the balance between clarity and flexibility, noting the importance of retaining room for professional judgment and design innovation while still providing clear expectations.

The panel responded positively to the increased emphasis on landscape, open space, and public realm considerations. It was noted that the long-term success of the guidelines will depend not only on building design, but on how well they support livability, quality public space, and overall urban experience.

The panel noted the importance of heritage preservation, emphasizing the need for coordination between the CDDG and heritage-specific policies (e.g., Chinatown, Gastown) to ensure sensitive integration with historic contexts.

Overall, the panel expressed strong support for the CDDG, highlighting the value of a clearer, consolidated framework while emphasizing the need for precise language, consistent application, robust training, and further detailed review to support effective implementation and broader urban design outcomes.

Staff's Response: The Staff team thanked the panel for their comments.