

**URBAN DESIGN PEER REVIEW PANEL**  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

February, 2020

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE URBAN DESIGN PEER REVIEW PANEL (UDPRP)**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The Urban Design Peer Review Panel serves as an independent urban design advisory panel to the City of London. The Panel is strictly an advisory body and does not have the authority to approve or refuse projects or make policy decisions.

### **1.2 Responsibilities**

To provide timely, consistent and effective urban design advice within the planning and development approvals processes by:

- (a) Reviewing development proposals to ensure the intent of the Official Plan, other relevant City policies, and urban design guidelines are met;
- (b) Providing City staff, and through them to development proponents, advice that encourages and supports high-quality design that fits well within the applicable context, aids in contributing to the success of projects, and enhances the quality of life for London's citizens; and,
- (c) Acting as a resource for City staff in the development of urban design policy, goals, guidelines and implementation processes within the approved urban design context of the City of London.

## **2.0 SCOPE OF WORK**

The UDPRP operates as part of the established development review process and supplements the development review process.

The UDPRP provides advice to City staff on applicable planning applications, including Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Subdivision Applications and Site Plan Applications pertaining to urban design, as well as advice on urban designed-focused policy amendments and other initiatives. The advice of the UDPRP will be included in the applicable staff reports to the appropriate Committee of Council and/or to the applicable Approval Authority.

The UDPRP will evaluate applications related to their potential role in fostering:

- A well-designed built form;
- Development that is compatible and a good fit within its context;
- A high-quality, distinctive and memorable city image;
- Development that supports a positive pedestrian environment;
- All types of active mobility and universal accessibility;
- High-quality public spaces that are safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant;
- A mix of housing types;
- Sustainability; and,
- A sense of place and character through healthy, diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods.

City staff will consult with the UDPRP members and the development industry, on an as needed basis to review and update the Terms of Reference - Scope of Work of the UDPRP in order to ensure effective outcomes.

### 3.0 APPLICATIONS REVIEWED BY THE UDPRP

Applications that are to be reviewed by the UDPRP will be selected by the Director, Development Services (or designate). Applications may be selected based on meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Planning and Development Applications:
  - All public projects of significant scale. Small-scale projects such as pump stations, field houses, and minor park improvements may be exempt;
  - All developments within the Downtown, Transit Village, Mainstreet, Urban Corridor, and Rapid Transit Corridor Place Types (as identified on the map in Appendix 1);
  - All residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments 5-storeys in height and greater;
  - Infill developments (as defined by development of vacant or under-utilized parcels within existing urban areas that are already largely developed), where the proposed intensity is greater than the surrounding neighbourhood **AND** the form proposed is different than existing forms adjacent to the site (i.e. proposed townhouses or apartment with higher density than existing single family dwelling surrounding neighbourhood);
  - Development located at or visible from gateways (identified in *The London Plan*) along entrance streets into the city, including Veterans Memorial Parkway and Highways 401 and 402 (as identified on the map in Appendix 1);
  - Development in special character areas, such as those for which urban design guidelines have been adopted or those in the City's list of established Heritage Conservation Districts (as identified on the map in Appendix 1);
- City Initiated:
  - Urban designed-focused policy amendments and other initiatives lead by the City (such as: guideline documents, secondary plans, etc.)

All qualifying planning applications will be required to submit an Urban Design Brief prior to appearing at the UDPRP. The Panel members will have the opportunity to “green light” any application that is deemed by the Panel to meet all relevant urban design policies, guidelines and overall good urban design principles, thus eliminating the need to go to the panel meeting.

The Director, Development Services (or designate) has the discretionary authority to exempt a development application from additional UDPRP review if it has already received UDPRP review and no further urban design issues are identified.

## **4.0 MEMBER SELECTION, TERM AND REMUNERATION**

### **4.1 Composition**

The Urban Design Peer Review Panel (UDPRP) shall be comprised of not less than six (6) members, with at least three (3) architects and three (3) other professionals that influence the design of the built environment and are qualified in their field; these fields include, landscape architecture, urban design, planning or other professional fields that influence the design of the built environment.

### **4.2 Selection**

Panel members shall be selected from a qualified pool of candidates and approved by the Director, Development Services. A minimum of one member of the Panel must be practicing or have practiced in the field within London. No member shall be appointed to the UDPRP if they are employees of The Corporation of the City of London or if they are a Member of Council.

### **4.3 Term**

Panel members shall serve a two (2) year term from the date of their appointment and shall not sit for two (2) consecutive terms. There will be staggered terms based upon the following schedule to provide for a degree of continuity on the UDPRP:

Two (2) architects and one (1) individual from a profession that influences the design of the built environment, appointed on years ending in even numbers (i.e. 2020).

One (1) architect and two (2) individuals from professions that influence the design of the built environment, appointed on years ending in odd numbers (i.e. 2021).

### **4.4 Election and Role of Chair**

Members of UDPRP will elect a Chair at the first UDPRP meeting of the year with a term of (1) one calendar year. The Chair should have a minimum of one (1) year experience on the UDPRP to be eligible.

The role of Chair, or their designate, will be to preside over the discussions for each agenda item to ensure it receives a fair and thorough consideration from all members.

The Chair, or their designate, will provide a verbal summary of UDPRP advice and commentary at the end of each agenda item.

Within 10 business days of the relevant UDPRP meeting, a formal memo signed by the UDPRP Chair, or their designate, will be issued to relevant City Staff and the applicant.

#### **4.5 Remuneration**

There shall be no remuneration for UDPRP members.

Panel members travelling from locations outside of London may be compensated for their travel expenses within reason and at the discretion of the Director, Development Services (or designate).

#### **5.0 URBAN DESIGN BRIEF**

Proponents of developments selected to be reviewed by the UDPRP will be required to submit an Urban Design Brief for their proposal. Submission materials are required to provide sufficient and appropriate detail to be understood by the UDPRP members (including visuals), with explanatory written material, when necessary.

The requirements of the Urban Design Brief are outlined in the *Urban Design Brief - Terms of Reference*. Depending on the nature of the application, staff may work with the applicant to scope the Urban Design Brief and exempt certain aspects, as required.

Applicants should meet with the City's Urban Design Staff at the pre-consultation stage of development and planning applications, and receive project feedback prior to appearing before the UDPRP.

Urban designed-focused policy amendments and other policy initiatives lead by the City may not require an Urban Design Brief. However, all background information as well as the proposed policy changes or new policy initiatives should be provided to the Panel in line with the deadlines for submitting Urban Design Briefs.

#### **6.0 MEETINGS**

UDPRP meetings shall be held monthly, during the third week of the month. Exceptions may be made on the advice of the Director, Development Services or on the availability of members of the UDPRP, as required.

UDPRP meetings shall be attended by the Urban Designer assigned to the file with support from other applicable staff involved in the review of the proposal, to address specific matters.

UDPRP meetings shall be open to the public, but there shall be no written or verbal submissions by any individuals other than City staff, the applicant and/or their design consultant, and members of the UDPRP. The public will have an opportunity to make written or verbal submissions on applications through applicable public participation opportunities.

## 6.1 UDPRP Meeting Structure

### Pre-meeting (UDPRP members and City staff only):

The pre-meeting will allow the UDPRP members to discuss administrative items and give City staff the opportunity to provide clarification regarding any of the items on the agenda as necessary.

### Meeting (open to the public):

At the start of the meeting, the UDPRP members will have the opportunity to formally declare conflicts.

#### Individual items:

Time allotted for each individual item will be determined depending on the complexity of the applications. In the case of City Initiated Zoning By-law and Official Plan Amendments that are primarily design-based related to broad policy, secondary plans, guidelines, and other design related initiatives, City staff leading the project would be considered as the applicant.

Approximately 5 minutes

The applicant and their design consultant, present their project's context, design objectives and how it responds to relevant policies of the City's Official Plan and associated guidelines. **Emphasis should be placed on demonstrating the merits of the development through a series of images, diagrams, models and other visuals.**

Approximately 20 minutes

The UDPRP will deliberate and offer their comments and recommendations to the proponent. The UDPRP's comments will be based on Council-approved Official Plan policy and associated policies of the City. UDPRP comments may range from an acknowledgement of the positive design qualities of a proposal, to suggestions that encourage a design which better complies with Official Plan policy and relevant guidelines.

Relevant City staff involved in the review of the application will be present to respond to any questions or requests for clarification.

Within 10 business days following the UDPRP meeting, a formal memo signed by the UDPRP Chair, or his/her designate, will be issued to relevant City staff and

the applicant. The memo will summarize the UDPRP's comments with respect to the proposed development or design-based initiative in relation to the Official Plan and applicable City policies.

## 6.2 Quorum

Quorum is achieved when 50% or greater of UDPRP members are present.

Prior to a scheduled meeting:

- If quorum cannot be achieved prior to the scheduled meeting the UDPRP members who are unable to attend the meeting, will digitally review all applications and provide their individual comments to the UDPRP Chair, who will include the comments as part of the deliberations at the meeting.

Day of the scheduled meeting:

- If quorum is not attained at the start of the meeting, or if quorum cannot be met due to a conflict of interest, the UDPRP members may decide collectively if they will continue with the scheduled meeting without quorum with the focus of providing information exchange only. Alternatively, the UDPRP members could choose to adjourn the meeting and review all of the applications digitally and provide their comments to the UDPRP Chair, or their designate, who will compile the comments into a formal memo.

In either case no application will be postponed and each application will receive either a formal memo or a memo providing advice following their scheduled appearance at the UDPRP.

## 7.0 ADMINISTRATION OF PANEL

The following monthly submission sequence of Urban Design Briefs will apply to all applications appearing before the UDPRP:

1 <sup>st</sup> week of the month	<b>Wednesday;</b> submission deadline for Briefs submitted to City staff. <b>Friday;</b> Deadline for City staff to review Briefs for completeness and inform applicants of deficiencies.
2 <sup>nd</sup> week of the month	<b>Wednesday;</b> Deadline for applicant to resubmit materials and complete Urban Design Briefs are forwarded to the UDPRP.
3 <sup>rd</sup> week of the month	<b>Monday;</b> Deadline for UDPRP Chair to provide staff with a list of "green lit" projects, if applicable. <b>Wednesday;</b> Meeting of the UDPRP.

The agenda for each UDPRP meeting will be provided to UDPRP members along with the applicant submitted Urban Design Brief(s) a minimum of one (1) week prior to each UDPRP meeting. At that time the Panel will have the opportunity to “green light” any application that is deemed by the Panel to meet all relevant urban design policies, guidelines and overall good urban design principles. Upon receipt of written communication from the UDPRP Chair, by end of day on the third Monday of the month, these applications would be removed from the agenda and allowed to proceed immediately to the next step in the application process.

The minutes of all UDPRP meetings will be recorded by staff. Individual UDPRP members will not be identified in the meeting minutes. All comments will be recorded without attribution.

Within five (5) business days following the UDPRP meeting, staff will distribute the minutes the Chair of UDPRP and applicable City staff.

Within eleven (11) business days following the UDPRP meeting, staff will distribute the formal memo signed by the UDPRP Chair, or his/her designate, and the meeting minutes to relevant City staff and the applicant. Along with the formal memo and minutes, a UDPRP Comment Response Table will also be sent to the applicant that will need to be filled out and returned to the City as part of the application review process.

All relevant UDPRP materials including: UDPRP meeting agenda, submitted Urban Design Briefs, UDPRP meeting minutes, and the formal memo issued by the UDPRP Chair shall be published to the UDPRP web page on the City of London website.

Following the review of the application by the UDPRP, should it be determined that the changes made to the development proposal are significant, the applicant may request or be asked by way of a written communication from the Director, Development Services (or designate) to reappear before the UDPRP.

## **8.0 PANEL CONDUCT**

In this section:

“Relative” means a person’s spouse, common-law spouse, same-sex partner, child, parents, siblings or a spouse of any of the foregoing.

“Spouse”, “Child”, “parent” shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, c M.50.

In the performance of his or her duties, a UDPRP member shall not:

- place themselves in a position where a member is under obligation to any person who might benefit from special consideration or favour or who might seek preferential treatment in any way;

- accord preferential treatment to relatives or to organizations in which the member, their child, parent or spouse, have an interest, financial or otherwise;
- deal with an application to the City for a grant, award, contract, permit or other benefit involving the member or his or her immediate relative;
- place themselves in a position where the member could derive any direct benefit or interest from any matter about which they can influence decisions; and
- benefit from the use of information acquired during the course of their official duties which is not generally available to the public.

Where a UDPRP Member believes they have a conflict of interest in a particular matter, they shall:

- prior to any consideration of the matter, disclose their interest and the general nature thereof;
- remove themselves from the table for the duration of time that the matter is being considered; take part in the discussion or recommendation in respect of the matter; and
- not attempt in any way whether before, during or after the meeting to influence the voting on any such question or recommendation.

A request for an investigation of a complaint that a UDPRP member has contravened the above shall be:

- made in writing, setting out reasonable and probable grounds for the allegation that a member has contravened the Panel Conduct of the Terms of Reference and signed by an identifiable individual (which includes the authorized signing officer of an organization);
- filed with the Director, Development Services (or designate), who, in the case of a complaint shall investigate the matter.

A Conduct Review Committee comprised of the Managing Director, Development and Compliance Services, the Director, Development Services and the Director, City Planning, may determine:

- that there has been no contravention of the Panel Conduct;
- that a contravention occurred although the member took all reasonable measures to prevent it;
- that a contravention occurred that was trivial or committed through inadvertence or an error of judgment made in good faith; or
- that the member has contravened the Panel Conduct and take any corrective actions, including removal from the Panel.

## **9.0 CONFIDENTIALITY**

UDPRP Members may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement pertaining to any material of a proprietary nature which is forwarded to them in carrying out the UDPRP's mandate.