CR_7736 Attachment 1 - Edmonton Design Committee Review

What We Heard Report

October 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The EDC Policies and Procedures review has been undertaken to ensure that the Edmonton Design Committee remains a relevant voice in the planning and design conversation being undertaken in Edmonton. The review was initiated by the EDC, and is being undertaken by Administration with the support of the EDC.

This document captures engagement with a number of different stakeholder groups. The intent of the engagement was to not only identify current issues and concerns with the EDC, but also to imagine how the EDC could function differently in the future.

This document describes two broad phases of engagement: initial engagement (Part 1) undertaken to provide input and direction to review process, and subsequent engagement (Part 2) to ensure the Policy and Procedures Review document not only reflects what was heard, but also captures the best possible approach to future changes to the EDC.

1. Initial Engagement

In late 2018 Administration, with the support of the EDC, developed a number of engagement opportunities with both internal and external stakeholders. More detail on the engagement program is below.

Engagement	Stakeholder Group	Results
Committee Workshop	Committee	Appendix A
Drop-in Sessions	Internal and external stakeholders	Appendix B
Questionnaire	General public	Appendix C
Interviews	Past applicants, past Committee members, City Architect	Appendix D
Other Engagement	Urban Development Institute, City Council	Appendix E

Engagement Summary

Appendix E contains an overall summary of the engagement program at the outset of the Policies and Procedures Review project. In order to make sense of the findings, comments have been grouped into the following themes:

- Submission Requirements, Timing and Scheduling
- EDC Structure, Makeup and Performance
- Communication and Feedback
- Overall Value of EDC

These themes are presented below.

Issue / Opportunity		Discussion
Submission Requirements, Timing and Scheduling		
1	Clarifying and simplifying submission requirements and procedures	Submissions are often onerous and costly
		The submission process is not clear
		Submissions are often incomplete
2	Reducing wait times and impacts on overall project schedules	Wait times are too long. Applicants often hold spots and subsequently cancel, affecting the capacity of Committee
		Some Applicants are unaware of EDC timeframes, inadvertently affecting project schedules
EDC Structure, Scope and Procedures		
3	Ensuring EDC is a high functioning committee	Need to recruit and retain experienced professionals + interested citizens
		Committee members inconsistently follow procedures and rules of order
		Deliberations and meetings are often long and contribute to 'decision fatigue'
4	Ensuring the right projects are being reviewed by EDC	Value of Committee is being misdirected, and that increased demand compromises the capacity, efficiency and effectiveness of Committee
5	Ensuring the scope and focus of EDC's review is appropriate, including Principles of Urban Design	<u>Principles of Urban Design</u> are out of date and rarely referred to
		Committee review and commentary is sometimes perceived as being out of scope or not relevant to projects (eg. the review of DC regulations)
6	Ensuring the review process, and the purpose, application and impact of motions, remains relevant	Ensure the Committee has the right tools and that they are used appropriately and consistently (eg. walk-ons), and that the motions and recommendations align with other City approval processes
7	Improving both the informal and formal processes	Informals could be more informal and 'crit-like' with lower submission expectations
		Formal comments are often perceived as negative, subjective and generally unhelpful. City projects feel particularly targeted.
		Formal and informal comments are sometimes inconsistent
Communication + Feedback		
8	Ensuring motions and recommendations are clear and meaningful	Motions and recommendations are often not clear or communicate specific intention, and often do not reflect the conversation between the Applicant and Committee
9	Improving communication with Council	There is an opportunity for Council to receive input on more than rezonings
		Correspondence to Council (and others) does not communicate the full Committee discussion

	Communication + Feedback (Continued)	
10	Creating a process for Applicants and the public to provide feedback to EDC	Feedback on EDC is often through upper level management and Councillors

2. Edmonton Design Committee Review - Report

In late 2019 and early 2020, the focus of the Policy and Procedures Review shifted to the development of a EDC Review report, including a number of recommended actions to ensure the continued effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the EDC.

During this period, engagement primarily focused on follow-up conversations with stakeholders originally interviewed during Part 1. Additional engagement included:

- Online survey tool
- Presentation to / conversation with Urban Development Institute (Planning Committee)
- Presentation to / conversation with the Alberta Association of Architects (Core Stakeholder Group).

Engagement Summary - Incorporating What We Heard

This subsequent engagement identified a number of additional items of consideration, which have been incorporated into the EDC Review report. These include:

- Establishing partnerships to achieve advocacy goals.
- Including post-mortems as a part of annual EDC retreats
- Confirming that the EDC should operate as an advisory committee
- Ensuring Committee members have access to basic planning information
- Further leveraging project synopses, providing information well in advance of meetings
- Revisiting terms for Committee members
- Clarifying the role of the Alberta Association of Architects in recruitment
- Encouraging young designers to take part; and offering coaching opportunities
- Better aligning the review of City projects with major milestones (eg. public engagement)
- Ensuring that City projects in industrial areas are also reviewed by the EDC
- Strengthening relationships with other design review panels (eg. Calgary)
- Including references to City Policy C575C (including training and performance evaluation)
- Ensuring greater respect / appreciation of different professional perspectives
- Exploring opportunities for EDC representation at Public Hearing

3. NEXT STEPS

Administration will present the Policy and Procedures Review to Urban Planning Committee in late 2020. Following this, Administration will develop detailed action plans focusing on three key areas- amending EDC Bylaw 14054, developing a terms of reference, and assisting the EDC in the development of annual workplans.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A / ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Introduction

Between October and December 2018, Administration created an online questionnaire to gather feedback on past EDC experience. The results of the questionnaire are as follows:

1.   Have you interacted with the Edmonton Design Committee (EDC) in the past?

Yes	80%
No	12%
Not sure / Don't know	8%

25 participants

1a. What best represents your past interaction with EDC?

Property Owner / Developer	30%
Consultant	60%
Other (please specify)	10%

20 participants

2.   In the past have you…

Had an Informal Pre-consultation with EDC?	80%
Submitted a Formal Submission to EDC?	95%

20 participants

3.   Did the Pre-Consultation clarify requirements and expectations in advance of the Formal Submission?

Yes	63%
No	38%

16 participants

3c. Why did you say that?

● It provides an opportunity for the Committee to clearly identify areas of concern and

opportunities to improve the project.

- Having presented 4+ projects for Pre-Consultation, I can't recall receiving much in the way of significant feedback that has influenced the design. Given the time required in preparing a submission, I question the value of the Pre-Consultation.

- The level of interaction with Owners/Consultants is increasing which is a good sign of a collaborative approach.

- the concepts of edc should not talk to aesthetics but more to the quality of the urban environment.

- The Committee did not express opinions from the formal letter at the pre-consultation.

- Only to an extent. We've found on multiple occasions that the Pre-Consultation comments are inconsistent with the Formal Submission comments, and do not provide adequate or fair preparation for the Formal Submission. More attention should be paid by the Committee to providing this consistency of feedback across submissions. Formal meeting minutes for the pre-consultations could be beneficial.

- We spent a lot of extra time trying to address the requests and feedback of the Committee, only to have the submission denied at the formal anyhow. A lot of the feedback requested information and details that were not yet developed and didn't need to be developed for a development permit, so it is odd that the dp and edc requirements are even connected in the process.

3d. Do you feel the Pre-Consultation contributed to a successful Formal Submission?

Yes	63%
No	38%

16 participants

3e. Why did you say that?

- Issues identified in the pre-consultation could be addressed, leading to support at the formal submission.

- In my experience, the most successful projects (those supported by EDC) are the ones that either have not had a Pre-Consultation, or ones where the design changed dramatically due to budget constraints following the Pre-Consultation. Projects that have had positive Pre-Consultations are the ones that seem to receive conditions and negative feedback at the Formal EDC presentation.

- Any input we can get on behalf of our projects is a positive in developing a solution that builds stronger communities and avoids confrontational situations.

- because we were able to address why or why not we were able to implement suggestions by EDC. If no pre-consultation, there may not be the opportunity to study EDC suggestions

to determine if they work and are reasonable or feasible.

- the urban environment is an area that needs people have experienced and researched many places commenting on its quality without an experienced background is detrimental to projects because comments are based only on assumptions and not experience

- In the past it was less prescribed which left some feeling unprepared. I think the pre consultations have set clear expectation that can be or need to be addressed appropriately.

3f. How could the Pre-consultation process be improved to contribute to a successful Formal Submission?

- The Committee can identify what steps are required for each specific project to lead to a successful outcome. If this is too challenging to provide at this stage, then perhaps Pre-Consultations should only be encouraged for large scale projects where the meeting provides clarification on potential support.

- We have undertaken to invite City of Edmonton Planners and Development Officer(s) to participate in key design meetings. This is working well in that these individuals can effectively influence the outcome and develop a sense of ownership in a collaborative setting.

- Written comments or an email clarifying EDC comments would help in addressing issues or concerns in the formal. Also, it should be OK for EDC members to say they have no issues or concerns instead of trying to find negatives. If there are no issues or concerns, it would be good to hear what is positive about the design - even if there are concerns, it is good to understand what is positive.

- Individuals involved should prove through photos, writing, videos, interviews etc... that they have visited, studied, researched and or lived in multiple places that their opinions are based on multiple experiences and they can articulate those ideas in an understandable and critical way

- Committee should be more honest and forthcoming about their objections to the design, elements that would lead to a non-support that could be addressed before the formal.

- Guidelines and benchmark references would help ignite or confirm a desired design expression.

- During pre-con, provide meaningful feedback with respect to design principles versus being hung up on building details. Detail discussion should happen at formal presentation.

- It would be interesting to feel inspired, when walking away from a pre-consultation with the EDC.

- Perhaps, inspired by the amazing project precedents that the EDC had brought forward as suggestion to look at that might be similar typology to the project being presented, as example.

- Consistent feedback from members and wait times to get a meeting that won't compromise

the project.

- Formal minutes by EDC

- Consistency between members present at Pre-Consultation and Formal Consultation

- More open dialogue. Meetings are too formal and stiff. It is often difficult to gauge how Committee members actually feel. Some questions are cryptic and not helpful to consultants.

- More clear and precise comments

- EDC should be informed about dp requirements. Do not ask for details that fall outside the jurisdiction of the dp. Or, disconnect the two entirely and have the edc submission either before or after DP.

- Less subjective

4. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your interaction with EDC.**

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Overall the EDC review process leads to a better design	16%	40%	32%	8%	4%	0%
The EDC review process helps me better collaborate with City Administration	8%	32%	28%	24%	4%	4%
The EDC Formal Submission process is easy to understand	12%	28%	20%	24%	4%	12%
It is easy to get more information if needed	8%	32%	24%	8%	16%	12%
The EDC Formal Submission requirements are reasonable	8%	28%	20%	24%	12%	8%

The time to get a booking is reasonable	8%	8%	20%	28%	20%	16%
The EDC Principles of Urban Design help inform better design outcomes	24%	36%	16%	12%	12%	0%

25 participants

Overall the EDC review process leads to a better design

Strongly agree	16%
Somewhat agree	40%
Neither agree nor disagree	32%
Somewhat disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	4%
No opinion	0%

25 participants

The EDC review process helps me better collaborate with City Administration

5 Strongly agree	8%
4 Somewhat agree	32%
3 Neither agree nor disagree	28%
2 Somewhat disagree	24%
1 Strongly disagree	4%
No opinion	4%

25 participants

The EDC Formal Submission process is easy to understand

Strongly agree	12%
Somewhat agree	28%

Neither agree nor disagree	20%
Somewhat disagree	24%
Strongly disagree	4%
No opinion	12%

25 participants

It is easy to get more information if needed

Strongly agree	8%
Somewhat agree	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%
Somewhat disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	16%
No opinion	12%

25 participants

The EDC Formal Submission requirements are reasonable

Strongly agree	8%
Somewhat agree	28%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%
Somewhat disagree	24%
Strongly disagree	12%
No opinion	8%

25 participants

The time to get a booking is reasonable

Strongly agree	8%
Somewhat agree	8%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%
Somewhat disagree	28%

Strongly disagree	20%
No opinion	16%

25 participants

The EDC Principles of Urban Design help inform better design outcomes

Strongly agree	24%
Somewhat agree	36%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%
Somewhat disagree	12%
Strongly disagree	12%
No opinion	0%

25 participants

4. Would you like to add any comments regarding your interaction with EDC?

- My only interactions are as an observer and occasional reporter; I appreciate the questions the Committee asks of development proponents, and appreciate the work they put into raising the design bar in Edmonton.

- I do notice some developers do not respect the Committee enough to have all of the requested materials on hand for their formal presentations. I think the Committee should have the power to refer those developers to a later date if they are not fully prepared to present.

- I have participated in submissions for multiple projects at EDC and have not found it to be a very valuable process. While most projects have received EDC support, a few have had conditions that I believed were unreasonable.

- My biggest issue is that (some) Committee members overstep their bounds. I would like to see a more focused attempt at limiting the discussion to the Urban Principles, and with more respect given for a client's budget. Aside from this, the EDC process adds a fair amount of time, cost, effort, and risk to a project.

- With that said, I do believe there is a place for a design review board in our City that enforces a certain standard of urban design. I would be interested in asking the Committee members if they feel they are making a difference with the projects at the low-end of the design spectrum. To me, this is where the focus should be.

- Comments provided by the Committee are thorough, well thought and clear.

- Ensure that the individuals on the Committee participate from an unbiased and informed position. Smart people lead to the best design for our communities.

- Again, I think it is ok for EDC members to give positive feedback on what is right with a design instead of trying to find something negative - if there is not anything negative. Constructive recommendations that contribute positively to the environment are of course welcomed. Reinforce that these are only recommendations and that there could be a plethora of reasons for why EDC recommendations cannot be implemented.

- Rewrite EDC's PUD. A terrible repetitive document.

- Encourage brief submittals.

- It has been difficult mostly their comments are very loosely based and its hard to take when its coming from a person who does not have experience in the field of urban design nor experience in many different types of urban spaces, are more educated, experienced and truly critical panel needs to be vetted. The fault I believe is not in the panel itself but in its selection process. I think its an important panel that needs to continue but with the right people who have a critical educated experienced opinion.

- My history with this process is that it has been just that, a process, as opposed as something to look forward to. Such as being in design school and being excited to present a project to a group of peer because you know that you are going to get some healthy design-critique / advice back from multiple people. If you have a shitty design...you hear about it quickly. If you have a great design, great discussion results. Again, it would be interesting if the pre-con. and formal presentation process was actually fun. Or more rewarding...again, knowing that somehow this process is going to actually going to inform a design and push the boundary of what design in Edmonton can be.

- This is a touch challenge for the new EDC. How do you re-brand the whole thing and actually make it fun?

- Update your processes internally.

- Adds MONTHS to the current timelines

- Committee member comments often do not seem to be guided by the "Principles of Urban Design" document. This can make the process feel arbitrary and beyond the mandate of the Committee.

- No comment

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the scope and makeup of EDC.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Questions and comments from the Committee are clear and insightful	12%	28%	24%	20%	12%	4%
Letters from the Committee are clear and easy to understand	20%	20%	32%	16%	4%	8%
Representation on the Committee is appropriate for a wide range of different projects	16%	32%	24%	16%	12%	0%
The scale, type and location of projects being reviewed by EDC is appropriate	4%	40%	24%	24%	8%	0%

25 participants

Questions and comments from the Committee are clear and insightful

Strongly agree	12%
Somewhat agree	28%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%
Somewhat disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	12%
No opinion	4%

25 participants

Letters from the Committee are clear and easy to understand

Strongly agree	20%
Somewhat agree	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	32%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	4%
No opinion	8%

25 participants

Representation on the Committee is appropriate for a wide range of different projects

Strongly agree	16%
Somewhat agree	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	12%
No opinion	0%

25 participants

The scale, type and location of projects being reviewed by EDC is appropriate

Strongly agree	4%
Somewhat agree	40%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%
Somewhat disagree	24%
Strongly disagree	8%
No opinion	0%

25 participants

5a. Would you like to add any comments regarding the scope and makeup of the Committee

- I think the Committee makeup is well-rounded and represents a broad range of design experience and expertise, though I wonder if it wouldn't benefit from a participating city planner as well?

- I am pleased to see the scope of EDC is expanding to TOD and large sites, and hopefully to newly aspiring main streets as well. I hope the city will provide them with the resources necessary to manage this expanded mandate.

- It should include more developers with actual experience in development, not just consultants.

- Previous comments apply

- The Committee is too large and there should be representation from the development community. Members at large should not be professionals that practice in a area represented on the EDC, but rather truly be members at large. There should be a screening process as to whether a development proposal should go to EDC (ie) size of the project. Location in Edmonton should not matter and n fact, some of the suburban developments should do in front of EDC to ensure proper design and planning principles are adhered to.

- I found the Committee members to be well qualified. They were positive and effective in their questions . It was a good experience

- the scope should be varied but again experience in comments from the panel should be utmost

- Committee often struggles with understanding their role, going into a 'design by Committee' mode where they express personal opinions rather then professional, constructive insight to improve the design.

- I have also experience members disputing the program of the facility and its relevance. Interventions that are at best inappropriate.

- The scope is questionable for the amount of people and resulting length of time that it take to book a pre-con or formal presentation.

- I find the make-up even more questionable. Again, i expect, as a member of the consulting industry (and tax payer) an extremely high-caliber group of design professional or members of the community with either a vast amount of construction experience or a vast amount of travel experience related to design and studying design and therefore being able to comment and provide insight as to precedents throughout the world.

- The jurisdiction and scope should be updated.

- Expertise in Design is a must

- A diverse group of professionals would be preferred and those with actual development experience so that comments are valuable and so that comments lead to better design more often. It would be beneficial if projects outside of the core areas could have the option to present to EDC if they want additional feedback on proposed designs, but I do understand that the current Committee is overwhelmed with application reviews and stays late and for multiple days to get through the applications which doesn't seem fair or appropriate.

6. **Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Edmonton Design Committee?**

- I think EDC has done a lot to raise the design bar in Edmonton. I couldn't say if the process is onerous for developers or not, but I just want to say I value their work and hope the city also values their work enough to give them what they need to work with an expanded mandate.

- The EDC is a critical asset to ensure exemplary design and development in Edmonton

- No

- I would encourage members to express when they like a project and what is positive and valuable about a project. If a member truly does not see any negatives in a project, they should not say they do just for the sake of saying something. Learning form the good can be just a powerful as learning from the negative.

- Good choices of Committee members

- keep it but - with better critiques who are educated and experienced in urban design

- Membership should be renewed more often and efforts should be made to increase the level of expertise of the members.

- I'm happy to live in a city like Edmonton where design culture is taken seriously. I promote the EDC and am happy to take any of the project I work on in front of that Committee. I simply wish I walked away from each experience feeling creatively inspired.

- Process for appealing or seeking further clarity/discussion on EDC decisions is not clear.

- A submission template should be developed

- There is potential for this to be more value add to projects, and it shouldn't be a blanket requirement or it starts to lose purpose and value. This Committee needs to have representation to incorporate big picture and future thinking but also needs to be composed of persons who have professional training and background as they can lead to changes that will impact our entire city for many many years to come.

APPENDIX B / EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Introduction

In early 2019, Administration undertook interviews with a number of stakeholders regarding previous experience with EDC. Interviews were conducted with a developer (1), architects (9), planners (2), landscape architects (2) and previous Committee members (2). The results of these interviews are as follows:

- Very inconsistent. No feel of what way a discussion will go… particularly - comments are out of left field.
- Comments are sometimes subjective.
- Sometimes the comments suggest a lack of trust with the consultants.
- Value engineering should be considered as part of the EDC review process.
- Sometimes the comments are minor - the projects should just get approved.
- Public art for City projects - often architects had an idea of the intent, but not good enough for the Committee.
- City projects are perceived to be held to a higher standard… unfortunate since the City hires good architects.
- What's going to happen when projects are re-budgeted, and will projects have to come back to EDC continually?
- Not really an issue with timeframes - appreciates that we try to accommodate through cancellations, additional meetings.
- Overall feels that EDC has been a benefit. EDC makes City have to hire good consultants and pursue good design. Used in scoring consultants during procurement. Consultants appreciate it.
- Might not be the difference between a very good and an outstanding building.
- Doesn't like to have to come back and back (ie. why are projects being 'refused'?)
- EDC should do a retreat for the Committee.
- Members should be evaluated and adjusted as necessary.
- No opinion on making informals more informal (consultants are doing SD reports anyway)
- EDC shouldn't be making comments outside of the project scope.
- Needs to be consistency in comments (ie. between meetings and comments - different meetings and presentations are sometimes treated differently).
- Good projects should be complemented… effort should be ackowledged

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- EDC gives leverage with clients.
- EDC is costly - developer pays out of pocket up t DP and very rarely recoup costs.
- Have we thought about doing this during day? - There would be benefits for consultants (work / life balance). City might have to pay higher per diems - which might legitimize the Committee further. If they see themselves more as professionals, perhaps they will behave differently.
- EDC can be a soapbox for Committee members.
- Timing can be an issue.
- Need to be mindful of MGA and 41 day turnaround for DPs.
- Project gatekeeping would be helpful.
- There should be different checklists - tower vs. small projects.
- Younger DOs tend to like checklists.

- EDC boundary should focus on arterials, corridors, etc.
- Principles of Urban Design poorly written and needs to be refreshed.
- Can projects be filtered by zoning, use, floor area, etc?
- Need to reduce printing - costly.
- There should be a way to easily connect directly to the display to be able to view a model or similar from a consultant's desktop.

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- Things have changed in the last year.
- Committee has been asking more thoughtful questions (has been pleasantly surprised), and could be more thoughtful
- The only moment where design can be discussed.
- Sitting on the Committee not seen as desirable. Raising the bar might encourage a higher quality of applicant - it should be an honor, not a chore.
- Committee - personal biases come out
- Typos - undermine the overall value of the conversation.
- Nitpicking comments are more about ego and individual than the projects.
- Not really helped projects (formal), whereas informal have been very helpful.
- EDC wants to be aspirational - this can be done at the informal presentation.
- How to deal with projects that change - either between informal and formal, or even after formal.
- EDC should not be a hammer to beat people down, but instead to set the bar.
- EDC spends time building narrative around a project - history, etc.
- Should the role of the Committee be to stop design? Does the Committee have the expertise to judge design?
- The process depends on the people around the table.
- Principles of Urban Design should be the framework.
- Clients sometimes see EDC as a wildcard - and the comments undermine the process.
- Can the EDC submission be combined with DP?
- Materials board - maybe doesn't add value - hard to get samples and at that point it is aspirational; ie. often changes during the development approval / CD process.
- Should Committee members be automatically reappointed?
- Should we work with professional organizations to improve the situation?

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- Generally good comments, sometimes too specific.
- Sometimes applicants have to present projects that are not well aligned with the Principles of Urban Design.
- Informals provide an opportunity to bring tough clients into, and gain an appreciation of, a design conversation.
- Nitpicky comments compromise the ability of the Committee and the Applicant to have a meaningful design confirmation. Committee members should be reprimanded for this behavior.
- Having a planner present an overview is of value. Is there value having the Applicant hear the overview?

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- When EDC was a Committee of the Mayor, it seemed to have more teeth.
- EDC needs more teeth, perhaps the requirement for EDC is more embedded in the zoning bylaw?
- Could there be an 'EDC lite' for small projects?
- Filtering projects by criteria such as floor area may work as long as the limits are compatible with corridors (ie. Main street). Projects could also be filtered by type and size / designed by an architect.
- Submission requirements could be better explained - what is needed and WHY?
- Comments need to match discussion, sometimes they are too generic.
- Architectural object vs. context is a central urban design issue.
- Streamline the process for smaller projects.
- Sometimes comments are too technical in nature (ie. CPTED, energy model).
- Calgary has focused more on the public realm interface vs. the architecture.
- Could a pre-app be combined with an informal in some way?

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- Sometimes EDC isn't aware of the full range of project issues.
- Comments are sometimes too broad, sometimes far too detailed.
- Overall the process can be helpful.
- Informals should be more informal - more conversational, more like a crit.

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- Often the comments are not insightful.
- Sometimes the comments are predictable.
- EDC can feel like a checkbox.
- Informal could be more informal - maybe smaller / 1x1 interaction.
- Maybe the informal is more of a meeting than a presentation.
- How to deal with projects, such as commercial projects, that keep changing?
- How to deal with those elements of the architecture that are inherently subjective?
- How to adequately deal with 'big' projects (eg. LRT)?
- Concern that design can affect cost.
- Need different requirements for rezonings vs. development permits.

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- Could projects be 'approved' at an informal?
- Could EDC be on SLIM?
- Had a good experience but had a good project to start.
- Questions are often not valid.
- Need better development industry representation.
- Should public art by judged by EDC?
- Is EDC an approval body?
- We should trust that applicants can fully address technical issues (eg. energy models). Are these kinds of conversations better directed to informal vs. formal presentations?

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- Need to be careful that projects don't come at the wrong time (eg. in the rezoning process). How do we deal with design changes, and does a project have to keep coming back to EDC?
- Should a rezoning project come to EDC only after it's been circulated and the applicant has made changes?
- Would like to see Committee review projects in more detail, comments are often too high level / not as hard hitting.

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- EDC can provide focus to design (as it congeals).
- Can convince clients of the strength of an idea and the need to stick with it.
- In the private sector there is little awareness of urban design - EDC is seen as another approval process, and often viewed with cynicism.
- Urban design is generally common sense and easy for clients to understand.
- Informal requirements are not clear.
- Would like informals to be even more informal - more conversational,
- Need to be careful that at informals projects are not too refined.
- Sometimes comments are not clear.
- Sometimes comments deal with architecture and not urban design.
- Continuity in Committee members an issue.
- Okay with Committee composition, and okay with comments by non-architects.
- Terms for Committee members may be too long.
- Night renders don't give a fair impression of design intent.
- Comments sometimes are too detailed.

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- Why are rezonings going to EDC?
- Going to EDC is an expensive exercise.
- Often the discussion with EDC is what the Applicant is already discussing with DOs.
- Why is EDC often focused on parking issues?
- Should be able to positively comment on projects; things tend to be more collaborative here in Edmonton than in other municipalities.
- Don't like showing floor plans as part of rezoning applications.
- Suggestion for timing - informal coordinated with first circulation, have second iteration before going back to EDC for formal.
- Why does EDC ask about community consultation or public amenity contributions?
- Informals need to be more conversational, so that elements of the project can be validated.
- Okay with preambles from file planners.
- Need constructive feedback on packages and presentations.

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- IIS (City) is not aware of EDC requirements - need to educate them.

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- Concern about decision fatigue - especially given the length of some meetings?
- There should be an annual board retreat.
- There should be training provided to the Committee, and in particular, the Chair.

APPENDIX C / ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Introduction

The table below summarizes the engagement detailed in Appendices A and B. In order to make sense of the findings, they have been grouped into the following themes:

- Submission Requirements, Timing and Scheduling
- EDC Structure, Makeup and Performance
- Communication and Feedback
- Overall Value of EDC
- Other

Comment - by Theme	Origin
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS, TIMING AND SCHEDULING	
1 Submission Requirements / Procedures	
Onerous and costly. Can compromise affordability of projects	Consult / Other
EDC requirements (lighting, signage) often misaligned with DP requirements	
IIS is not aware of EDC requirements or when to come to EDC.	Admin
Requirements should not be an issue - most consultants are preparing SD reports anyway.	Consult
Materials board - Is it of value given the challenges of putting one together?	Consult
Submission requirements need to be better explained (website, brochure)- what is needed and why?	Consult
Simplify requirements (eg. no construction details)	Other
Encourage electronic submissions	EDC
Need to have different, clear requirements for rezonings vs. development permits	Admin / EDC
Informal requirements are not clear	Consult
Night renders shouldn't be used - don't give a fair impression of design intent	Consult
Develop submission template / example	Consult
Encourage shorter submissions	Consult
Submissions are often incomplete - no formal process to review / accept / refuse	Admin / EDC / Other
2 Timing and Scheduling	
At what point in a circulation should a rezoning come to EDC?	Consult
How to review projects that keep changing? (ie. commercial projects)	Consult
Can EDC better integrate with other approval processes (eg DPs)	Consult
Can rezonings and development permits be combined?	Other
Current method of scheduling difficult to manage (ie cancellations)	Admin
Wait times are too long, submission times are too long	Other

EDC STRUCTURE, SCOPE AND PROCEDURES	
3	**Committee Makeup and Performance**

Evaluate members annually - not automatic reappointment	Consult
Should there be a board retreat to orient the Committee?	Admin
Should training provided to the Committee, and in particular, the chair?	Admin
Continuing education for Committee members	EDC
More urban designers, less architects	Other
Need better / more development industry member(s)	Consult
Review Committee members' terms - potentially increase from 1 to 2 years	Consult / EDC
Sitting on EDC presently not seen as desirable - should be peer review, not 'volunteer'	Consult / Other
Ensure appropriate professional / organizational representation	EDC
Should be a 'true' member-at-large	Consult
Committee needs to demonstrate more professional experience	Consult
Can Administration be a member of EDC (ex-officio?)	Admin
Committee members inconsistently follow procedures and rules of order	EDC / Admin
Meetings are too long / concern re: decision fatigue	Council
Has EDC considered meeting during the day?	Consult

4	**Geography / Project Type**

Could there be a screening process?	Consult / Other
Can there be different processes based on scale - eg. tower vs. small projects	Consult
Limit projects by floor area - as long as limits are compatible with other regs (ie. Main street)	Consult
Limit by type and size of project (ie. when designed by an architect)	Consult
Why not include suburban developments? Could encourage as optional	Consult
Consider requiring all high rises - regardless of location - to come to EDC	Other
Clarify what City projects need to come to EDC	IIS / Other
Consider adding view corridors	Other
Consider adding EDC boundary to SLIM maps	Other
Should EDC look at heritage designations? Special study areas?	Other
Consider that EDC can add value to non-traditional projects (ie laneway housing)	Other
Consider adding more 124, Garneau, Strathcona, Stony Plain Road (west of 142)	Other
Consider all city gateways	Other
Consider reducing Calgary Trail requirements	Other
Exclude exterior alterations except along nodes and corridors	Other
Include digital signs	Other

5	Committee Scope and Focus	
	Lenses	
	How is public art reviewed given separate EAC process	Consult
	Technical review of projects (eg energy modelling, CPTED)	Consult
	Dealing with aspects of design that are inherently subjective	Consult
	Principles of Urban Design	
	Should be the framework, but needs to be refreshed.	Admin / Consult / EDC
	Should reference WInter City design, new Energy code and Edmonton Declaration; emphasize context	Other
	Should align with City Plan	Other
	EDC does not want PUD to become a checklist.	EDC
	Best practice vs. subjectivity	Consult
	Scope of work	
	EDC often unnecessarily challenges City project's scope.	IIS
	Committee Focus / level of detail and refinement	
	Committee confusion re: EDC / DP submission	Admin
	Committee confusion re: Rezonings / DP- level of detail, reviewing DC regs	Admin / Consult
6	**Recommendations and Motions - Purpose, Application and Impact**	
	Is it EDC's role to halt design? Does EDC have the expertise to judge design?	Consult
	Not helpful to keep returning to EDC (ie. why is the Committee 'refusing' projects?)	Consult
	Tabling projects causes scheduling problems	Admin
	Consistency in review (table / admin walk-on, etc)	Admin
	Relationship with the development approval process (recommending or approving)	Admin
	Clarify relationship between EDC and Development Incentive Program	Other
	Clarify impact of non-support	Other
	Clarify Walk-on procedures (applicant? Administration)	OTher
	EDC recommendations need more teeth	Consult
	City projects held to a higher standard, with too detailed comments.	IIS
	Not clear how to appeal / seek clarity on outcomes	Consult
7	**Informals and Formals**	
	Informals (Good / Neutral)	
	Not onerous - consultants should be doing SD reports anyway	Consult
	The only moment where design can be discussed.	Consult
	EDC wants to be aspirational - this can be done at the informal	Consult

Involving tough clients provides them an appreciation of the design conversation	Consult
Encourage City projects to come for informals	Other
Informals - Observations	
Need to be careful that at informals projects are not too refined (eg FEP)	Consult
Requiring information beyond level of refinement required of DP	Consult
Informals - ideas	
Could projects be 'approved' at an informal?	Consult
Informals should be more informal - more conversational, more like a crit, more 1 x 1	Consult
Could a pre-app be combined with an informal in some way?	Consult
LImit informals to larger projects	Consult
At informals identify what could lead to support or non-support	Consult
Encourage design teams to invite COE staff to internal design meetings	Consult
Provide written comments from informals	Consult
Formals - Observations	
Lack of consistency between informals and formals	Consult
Sometimes a positive formal leads to negative informal	Consult
How to adequately deal with 'big' projects (LRT) - adjust presentation times	Consult
Committee Comments @ Formals	
Very inconsistent, with comments sometimes out of left field	Consult
Often subjective	Consult
Sometimes the comments suggest a lack of trust with the consultants (eg. FEP)	Consult
Good projects should be complemented.	Consult
Often personal biases / soapbox	Consult
Detailed comments undermine a meaningful design conversation	Consult
Architectural object / aesthetics vs. urban context	Consult
Urban design vs. zoning (parking)	Other
Sometimes the comments are predictable.	Consult
Comments are too high level / not hard hitting.	Consult
Commmittee should reference best practice and built examples	Consult
Committee Procedures and Practices - General	
Meetings	
Has EDC considered meeting during the day?	Consult
Project Synopses	
Are valuable Is there value having the Applicant hear the overview?	Consult
Is there value having the Applicant hear the overview?	Consult

	Is there value having the Planner hear the deliberation?	Admin
	Presentations	
	Connecting directly to TV / projector (ie. for movie)	Consult
	Making Applicants be responsible for their presentations	Admin
	COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK	
8	**Letters to Applicants**	
	Letters - needs to be consistency in comments (ie. between meetings and comments)	Consult
	Sometimes comments (letter) are not clear.	Consult
9	**Communication with Council**	
	There are communication gaps with EDC (Council perspective)	Council
	No mechanism to determine effectiveness of EDC communication to Council	EDC
	Current communication does not reflect actual conversation - just outcome of deliberation	EDC
10	**Ongoing feedback with Stakeholders**	
	There is no process for ongoing communication with, and feedback from, stakeholders	Other
	OVERALL VALUE OF EDC	
	Overall Value (Good / Neutral)	
	EDC gives leverage with clients	Consult
	Can convince clients of the strength of an idea and the need to stick with it.	Consult
	Overall Value (Bad / Concerned)	
	EDC is perceived as a checkbox.	Consult
	Little awareness of EDC in private sector - EDC is see as another approval process - cynical	Consult
	OTHER	
	Current bylaw too procedural, should be amended	Other
	Best practice review needed to inform change	Other