

Zoning Bylaw Review of Multi-Unit Project Development Regulations

Recommendation:

That the September 9, 2013, Sustainable Development report CR_382, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report outlines the approach Administration will use to review how Multi-Unit Project Developments are regulated in the Zoning Bylaw.

Report

The purpose of this review is threefold:

1. To standardize requirements for multi-unit project developments.
2. To assess the effectiveness of multi-unit project development regulations in meeting the needs of a variety of lifestyle options and demographic groups.
3. To ensure multi-unit project developments accommodate a broad range of housing types, while providing a viable alternative to fee-simple housing.

The focus of the review will be on ground-oriented residential multi-unit project developments.

Current Situation

As defined in the Zoning Bylaw, “Multi-Unit Project Developments” includes “developments of three or more

Dwellings, Commercial or Industrial uses developed on a Site that includes common property, such as, but not limited to, communal parking areas, driveways, private roadways, amenity areas, or maintenance areas that are shared.”

There are two kinds of multi-unit project developments:

1. Subdivided multi-unit project developments, which include some land that is privately owned, as well as some land that is communally owned;
2. Unsubdivided multi-unit project developments, which do not include land that is privately owned; all land is communal.

The issue with the current situation is that there are more regulations that apply to subdivided multi-unit project developments than to unsubdivided projects. In addition, land that is subdivided in a multi-unit project development is regulated in the same manner as fee-simple lots, which reduces the potential for creativity and flexibility in site design.

Further, a majority of multi-unit project developments are unable to meet current Zoning Bylaw regulations, resulting in the need for variances on the development permit. The need for variances introduces additional time, cost and uncertainty to the development permit review process, which in turn creates a disincentive for this kind of development.

Rationale for Review

A regulatory review will be conducted with the following three objectives:

1. To standardize requirements for multi-unit project developments.

This project seeks to add clarity to the regulations that apply to multi-unit project developments. Added clarity will increase certainty on the part of both development permit applicants and city residents regarding the potential built form of multi-unit project developments.

2. To assess the effectiveness of multi-unit project development regulations in meeting the needs of a variety of lifestyle options and demographic groups.

This review will assess how regulations can and should accommodate different lifestyle choices and respond to changes in the neighbourhood life cycle. It will also address how to encourage creativity and flexibility in site design.

3. To ensure multi-unit project developments accommodate a broad range of housing types, while providing a viable alternative to fee-simple housing.

This review will assess how multi-unit project development regulations can enable a broad range of housing types. It will also examine the potential advantages of multi-unit project developments over standard fee-simple development, and contribute to efficient land use.

Next Steps

In collaboration with the City's Office of Public Engagement, an integrated public and stakeholder engagement strategy will be developed, and a Public Involvement Plan will be prepared in accordance with City Policy C513.

Administration will engage a diversity of stakeholders to collaborate in creating regulatory solutions to address multi-unit project developments over the coming months.

Administration will return to a City Council Public Hearing with proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw in 2014.

Policy

The Way We Grow, Edmonton's Municipal Development Plan:

- Policy 4.4.1.1; Provide a broad and varied housing choice, incorporating housing for various demographic and income groups in all neighbourhoods
- Policy 4.5.1.1; Work proactively and in partnership with others to meet a wide range of affordable housing needs in all areas of the city
- Policy 5.1.1; Embrace high quality urban design throughout Edmonton.

Designing New Neighbourhoods: Guidelines for Edmonton's Future Residential Communities:

- Principle 2.1; Provide for and/or build attractive and inviting streets, buildings, parks and open spaces.
- Principle 3.1; Provide for a wide variety and choice of housing within the neighbourhood.

- Principle 3.2; Provide for affordable housing opportunities.

Corporate Outcomes

The Way Ahead, City of Edmonton Strategic Plan, 2009-2018:

- Improve Edmonton's Livability
- Transform Edmonton's Urban Form.

Public Consultation

At the time of writing this report, Administration had begun scheduling and conducting focus group sessions with stakeholder groups to chart the direction of this project, and to inform the scope and desired outcomes.

Stakeholders involved in this process will include Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Urban Development Institute, Canadian Home Builders' Association, the Edmonton Real Estate Board, the Infill Development in Edmonton Association, builders and architects, as well as members of the general public.

Further public and stakeholder consultation will be conducted as the project proceeds.

Others Reviewing this Report

- L. Cochrane, General Manager, Community Services
- D. Wandzura, General Manager, Transportation Services