

ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE

DISCUSSION PAPER



COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ZONES

Edmonton

July 2020 | edmonton.ca/ZoningBylawRenewal

These papers were created in 2020 to support Phase 1 of engagement. The content of these documents is subject to change as the draft Zoning Bylaw continues to be refined.



HOW TO USE THE DISCUSSION PAPERS

The discussion papers provide an entry point into the world of zoning by breaking it out into understandable parts and allowing Edmontonians to select topics that interest them. They explore various aspects of zoning and the new Zoning Bylaw, and provide the preliminary thinking and direction for the approach it may take. Please refer to the [Overview and Philosophy of the New Zoning Bylaw](#) for more information.

These papers are a **first attempt** at exploring potential directions for new zoning regulations. All Edmontonians – from developers to residents – are encouraged to explore the topics that interest them and provide feedback through the [Engaged Edmonton](#) platform. Information gathered through the discussion paper conversation will be used to help inform how the new Zoning Bylaw will be written.

TOPICS



**PHILOSOPHY OF THE
NEW ZONING BYLAW**



1 NODES & CORRIDORS



2 RESIDENTIAL ZONES



**3 COMMERCIAL &
INDUSTRIAL ZONES**



**4 AGRICULTURE &
RURAL ZONES**



**5 OPEN SPACE &
CIVIC SERVICES ZONES**



6 SPECIAL AREA ZONES



**7 DIRECT CONTROL
ZONES**



**8 NOTIFICATIONS &
VARIANCES**



9 OVERLAYS



10 SIGNS



**11 CLIMATE RESILIENCE &
ENERGY TRANSITION**



12 ECONOMY



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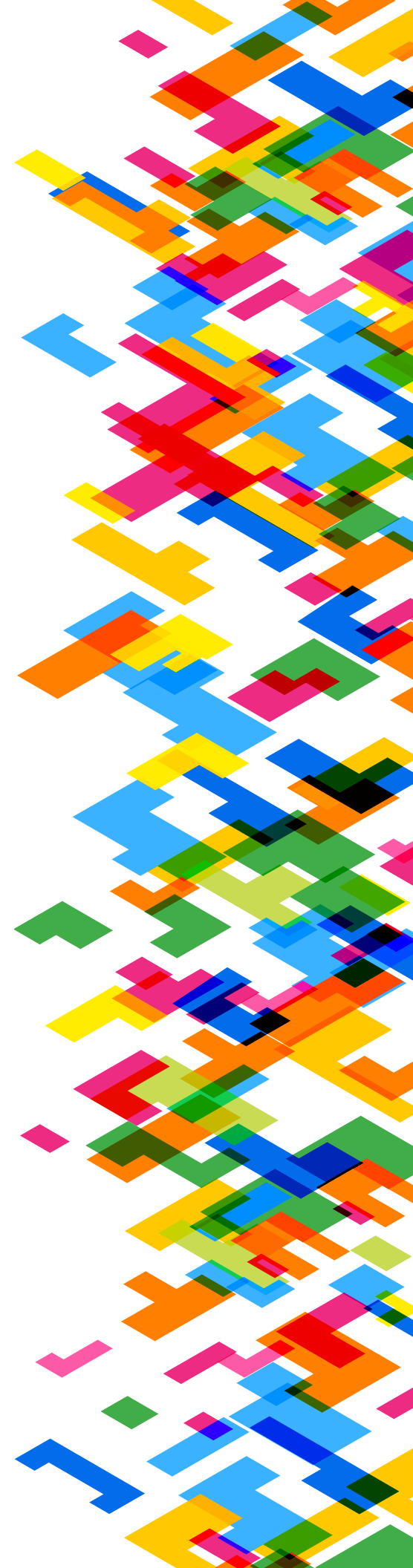
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CONVERSATION STARTER

How can the new Zoning Bylaw make Edmonton **more cost-competitive**?

This paper shows that the new Zoning Bylaw can do that by

- 1** Simplifying and reducing overlap between zones by **consolidating existing standard zones**

 - **From** 7 Commercial Zones
 - **To** 1 Commercial Zone + General Commercial
 - **From** 5 Industrial Zones
 - **To** 3 Industrial Zones + Business Employment + General Industrial + Heavy Industrial
- 2** Increasing **development certainty and adaptability**

 - **Opportunities**
 - + Wide range of uses to adapt to changing markets
 - + Broad and more inclusive use categories for innovation and flexibility
 - + Balanced commercial activities in industrial areas
 - + Gradual height transition from commercial to light industrial uses
- 3** Enhancing **pedestrian safety and livability**

 - **Opportunities**
 - + Universal accessibility
 - + Multimodal circulation
 - + Walkways
 - + Landscaping
 - + Reduce walking distance
 - + Interface with the public realm
 - + Increase visual appearance of development
- 4** Reducing **complexity within the development permitting process**

Please provide us feedback at engaged.edmonton.ca

INTRODUCTION

Making up **13% of Edmonton's land area**, the city's commercial and industrial zones are an important component of the Zoning Bylaw that enables development to contribute to **Edmonton's economic growth, a diverse economy, and employment opportunities for Edmontonians.**

Statistics Canada's Census Program provides a snapshot of the variety of business sectors providing jobs in Edmonton (**Fig 1**). Based on a 25% working population sample taken in 2016, the top three employment sectors in Edmonton included health care and social assistance, retail trade, and construction.

Based on an analysis for how industrial zoned land is currently used, Construction and Manufacturing sectors make up the majority of occupation types within Edmonton's industrial areas, at 25% and 22%, as illustrated in **Fig 2**, below.

The Draft City Plan projects approximately 520,000 additional jobs across the city when Edmonton reaches two million people for a total of 1.1 million jobs. Edmonton's employment zones

play an essential part in achieving the policies of The Draft City Plan by providing places where businesses can invest, helping our local economy thrive and providing employment opportunities, for residents to work, shop and access services, and for commercial and industrial development to occur in a safe and organized manner.

However, the current Zoning Bylaw has become outdated and the commercial and industrial zones are becoming increasingly ineffective in achieving the City's goals and meeting the needs of industry. These under-performing zones require that landowners take steps to secure time-consuming and expensive rezonings and plan amendments, which in turn makes Edmonton less competitive than other markets.

Fig 1. Edmonton Employment by Occupation Category, 2016 (25% Sample Data)

Total labour force population aged 15 years and over by industry 25% sample data – 2016

64,850	Health care and social assistance
60,745	Retail trade
57,780	Construction
39,970	Accommodation and food services
38,545	Professional, scientific and technical services
37,985	Educational services
37,155	Public administration
31,945	Manufacturing
24,940	Other services (except public admin)
24,625	Transportation and warehousing

Fig 2. Edmonton Employment on Industrial Lands by Sector, 2017

Edmonton Employment on Industrial Lands by Sector 2017

25%	Construction
22%	Manufacturing
11%	Wholesale trade
8%	Retail trade
8%	Professional, scientific and technical services
25%	Other

The New Zoning Bylaw

The new Zoning Bylaw provides the opportunity to rethink how, what and why the City regulates, with the end goal of creating a more flexible and simplified bylaw. More flexibility within zoning should support a more diversified economy, making the city more resilient to withstand the impacts of a boom and bust economic cycle, such as the cyclical energy sector, and other economic disturbances. Having a diversified economy can help maintain a stable tax base for the City to operate and employment prospects for residents.

The new Zoning Bylaw needs to ensure commercial and industrial zones can support both existing and emerging industries through appropriate development regulations. As technology continues to improve, and the way land is used and services are provided continues to shift, businesses will need to adapt to different and more innovative business models.

The new Zoning Bylaw can also enable a more competitive environment by providing more flexibility for development and reducing the complexity of land development processes. One way the Zoning Bylaw can enable businesses to adapt and diversify is by allowing for more uses within the commercial and industrial zones, and focusing regulations on land use impacts and patterns of activity rather than the specific nature of business activities or products and services being offered. These considerations set the foundation for how development will be regulated in the new Zoning Bylaw and inform the proposed directions for the commercial and industrial zones.

Employment Zones in The Draft City Plan Concept

The Draft City Plan builds on the work of ConnectEdmonton, the strategic vision for Edmonton. This vision reflects the city Edmontonians want to live in, which includes vibrant urban places that are part of a prosperous region. Vibrant urban places include a mix of businesses and amenities supported by pedestrian friendly environments that seamlessly connect development with the public realm.

Both commercial and industrial development directly contribute to Edmonton's, and the region's, economic development and prosperity. The regulations of the commercial and industrial zones have a direct role in enabling physical growth strategy for Edmonton's future as set out by The Draft City Plan. The Non-Residential Opportunities Network shown in [Fig 3](#) will accommodate the new commercial and industrial zones. New zoning regulations will be drafted with the intentions and directions of The Draft City Plan in mind. These policies are highlighted in the following section.

The Non-Residential Opportunities Network also includes the proposed Innovation Corridor. This corridor is intended to be a mixed-use, high density corridor, that links key innovation, learning, and academic hubs in Edmonton. For further information on how the new Zoning Bylaw will support the proposed Innovation Corridor, please refer to the [Nodes and Corridors discussion paper](#).

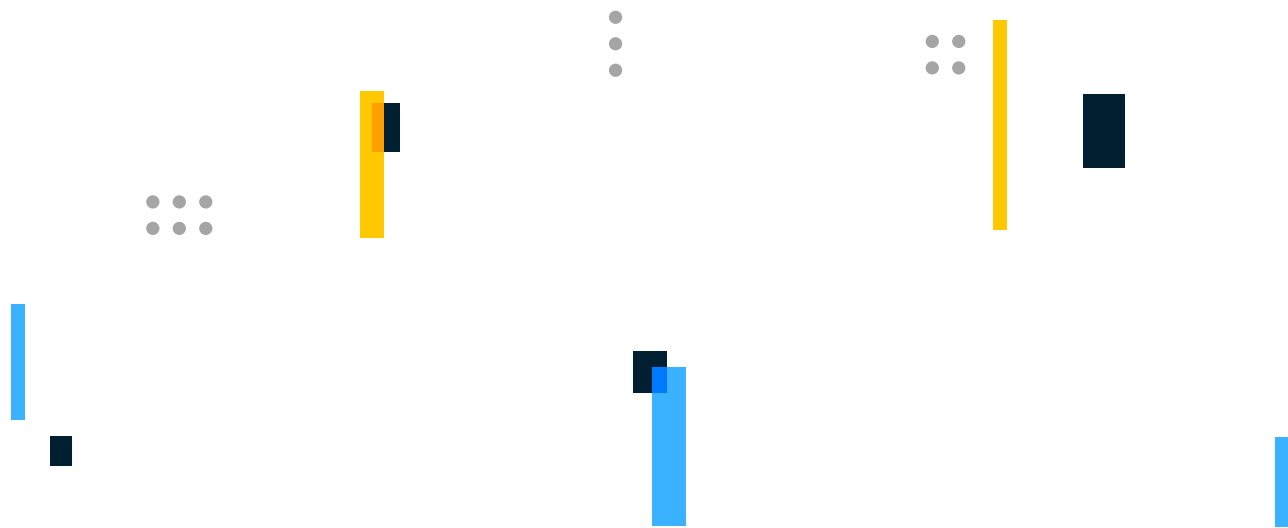
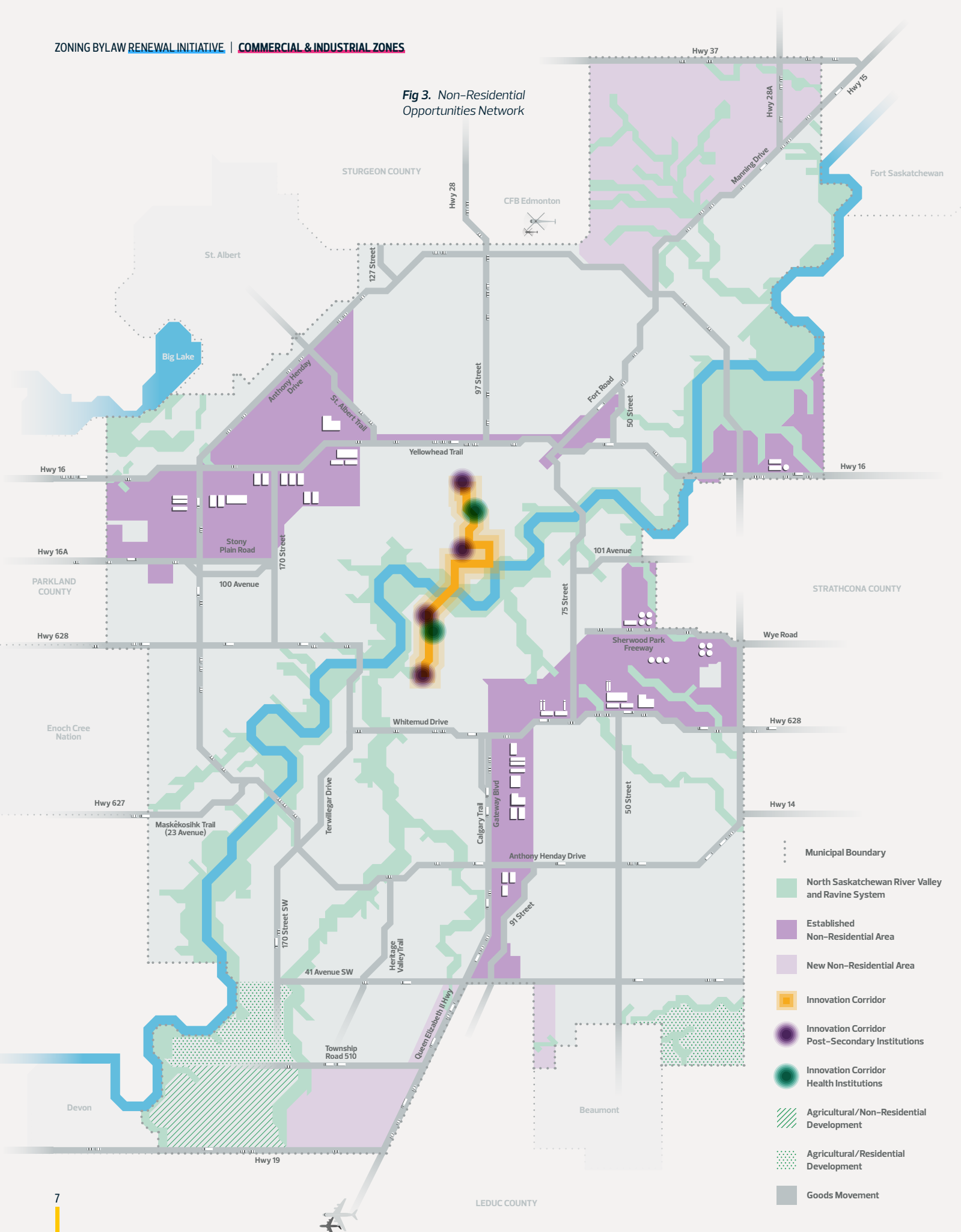












Fig 3. Non-Residential Opportunities Network



-  Municipal Boundary
-  North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System
-  Established Non-Residential Area
-  New Non-Residential Area
-  Innovation Corridor
-  Innovation Corridor Post-Secondary Institutions
-  Innovation Corridor Health Institutions
-  Agricultural/Non-Residential Development
-  Agricultural/Residential Development
-  Goods Movement

* Agricultural lands will be aligned with the Regional Agricultural Master Plan

CITY PLAN INTENTIONS AND DIRECTIONS

The proposed policies of The Draft City Plan provide direction in four areas related to commercial and industrial zones: **ensure safe development, foster investment and redevelopment, maintain viability for industrial growth, and improve pedestrian safety.**

Safe Development

The Draft City Plan policies recognize the importance of ensuring development occurs in an orderly and safe manner to protect public health and the environment. Directions related to this policy include managing potential risk associated with heavy industry, oil and gas facilities, pipelines, railway corridors, utilities, and utility corridors through the provision of adequate buffers, separation distances, and effective transition zones. The Zoning Bylaw has a role in ensuring risks are minimized through the organization of uses into zones and separating incompatible uses, such as high impact industrial activities from residential uses.

Investment and Redevelopment

The Draft City Plan policies acknowledge that when Edmonton prospers, the region prospers. Policy directions related to local and regional prosperity include identifying redevelopment opportunities to intensify non-residential lands supported by mass transit and encouraging the redevelopment of non-residential lands to contribute to the adaptability of districts. The new Zoning Bylaw can implement these policies by increasing development opportunities within the commercial and industrial zones by allowing for a broader range and configuration of uses in the commercial and light industrial zones and enhancing the development potential to enable the adaptive reuse of existing development. The new Zoning Bylaw is intended to support excellent service delivery, and that involves creating a regulatory environment where barriers to economic activity are minimized.

Viability for Industrial Growth

To promote the continuous improvement, evolution, and intensification of Edmonton’s non-residential lands, The Draft City Plan calls for the preservation of land supply necessary to support continued industrial growth. The Zoning Bylaw’s role in implementing this policy direction is by ensuring the viability of industrial development in industrial zones by restricting commercial uses in some areas to preserve opportunities for industrial development. This approach can enable more intensive activities without compromising the health and safety of people in non-industrial zones. It also prevents the widespread nature of commercial development across Edmonton and instead focuses this commercial development in strategic, concentrated areas to support vibrant communities.

Pedestrian Safety

Providing attractive and pedestrian-friendly areas creates a safe and pleasant environment for shoppers, visitors, and workers. The Zoning Bylaw plays a role in promoting the attraction and retention of a highly skilled and talented workforce by ensuring development is walkable and safe for pedestrians. Promoting the development of well-designed, walkable commercial areas, similar to Whyte Avenue and 124 Street, has the potential to draw in shoppers and visitors from neighbourhoods citywide, and can support a range of unique stores and services. Creating regulations with pedestrian safety in mind may improve the overall perception and image of the city.

A full list of The Draft City Plan policy objectives related to commercial and industrial zones is included [Appendix 1](#) of this paper.

Fig 4. City Plan Intentions and Directions



CURRENT ISSUES OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES

Internal and external stakeholders have raised a number of **issues and opportunities** for Edmonton's employment zones that can be addressed through the new Zoning Bylaw. Through conversations with stakeholders, Administration has heard the following concerns:

- + there are **too many zones with similar development outcomes**;
- + a need for **practical landscape requirements** in industrial areas;
- + current zones are **inflexible and limit uses**, creating uncertainty for the development industry and reliance on Direct Control zones;
- + **a lack of guidance** for regulating general industrial activities;
- + a need for **clear and simple development regulations**; and
- + a lack of **design guidance for pedestrian circulation and parking lots and development along internal roadways**.

Consolidating Zones for Development Certainty and Adaptability

Administration has heard from both internal and external stakeholders that there is too much overlap within the commercial and industrial zones and that reducing and consolidating similar zones could minimize redundancy and the need to rezone land to achieve similar development outcomes. Over time, it has become apparent that there is a need to simplify these zones to be more flexible and adaptable to diversify Edmonton's economy and respond to changing markets, while also providing more certainty for investment.

Previous engagement with commercial and industrial stakeholders identified a need for certainty of development potential, before the development permit stage, to minimize investment risks and facilitate efficient project management at the time of construction. The development community stated that a range of possible uses is required when developing land in order to attract tenants.

Additionally, a need for responsive and adaptable regulations are required as the commercial industry is experiencing rapid changes to business models, especially with a shift to online shopping models.

Commercial regulations will need to be able to adapt to this new reality by allowing creative reuse of big box commercial sites redeveloping over time. This may be through a combination of permitting smaller format commercial shops/services and limited residential opportunities.

Another concern raised by stakeholders is that some of Edmonton's industrial zones may be enabling too much commercial activity, which could compromise the City's ability to maintain its industrial land supply. For example, the Industrial Business (IB) and Light Industrial (IL) zones both allow for a greater range of commercial uses. Industrial land is typically cheaper compared to sites commercially zoned, which can attract commercial businesses to these areas. The allowance of commercial activities in industrial zones can also detract investment in areas closer to residents, impacting the livability and walkability of Edmonton's neighbourhoods. However, others have noted that commercial businesses in industrial areas often provide needed services to industrial businesses and their employees.

Enhancing Pedestrian Safety and Urban Design

Over the last 20 years, retail power centre developments have become common. The existing Zoning Bylaw provides minimal guidance on site design and how development should occur in relation to internal and private roadways, and within parking lots. Currently there are no regulations for how development is sited next to internal roadways, and current setbacks and walkways along public streets in these developments create awkward or uncomfortable spaces for pedestrians.

Power centre developments have a tendency to require substantial amounts of land dedicated to parking which have been demonstrated to have a negative effect economically, environmentally, and on the public realm. Vast expanses of impermeable surfaces increase stormwater runoff, placing additional burdens on the city's drainage infrastructure. The design of parking lots contributes to these hazards and issues and requires greater regulatory guidance in the new Zoning Bylaw.

Some commercial and industrial zones include design regulations intended to create safer environments for pedestrians or more visually appealing buildings. However, these regulations tend to be subjective and vague. Subjective regulations are difficult for development officers to review, which can lead to inconsistent decisions in how the rules are applied. Inconsistent decisions not only frustrate applicants seeking certainty, unclear regulations and expectations also can increase development permit timelines, variance requests, and appeals on development permit decisions. This not only impacts services the City provides, it increases costs for developers and businesses, and can detract investment in Edmonton.

Guidance on Industrial Activities

City staff identified that development regulations do not always reflect the intent of a zone. For example, Edmonton's industrial zones allow for general industrial activities as a permitted, as-of-right, use. However, the impacts associated with general industrial uses are typically managed through general purpose statements rather than development regulations. Not having clear development regulations to guide decision making can undermine the development officer's ability to ensure the intent of a zone is being maintained.

The misalignment of development regulations with high-level general purpose statements also causes uncertainty for applicants proposing developments considered discretionary, adding risk for developers investing in Edmonton.

These identified issues can help inform the development of updated zoning regulations which result in improved regulation legibility, certainty of development outcomes and safety for all users of the site. [Fig 5](#) provides a summary of potential opportunities of this work.

Fig 5. Opportunities for Commercial and Industrial Zones



MUNICIPAL BEST PRACTICES

Administration conducted a **jurisdiction scan** to see how other cities use innovative practices to:

- + manage **land use intensity** of commercial and industrial development;
- + consider **contextual and public realm conditions through regulation**, such as urban, suburban, and corridor environments;
- + address **pedestrian safety** in commercial and industrial zones;
- + apply zoning to provide **flexible and adaptive non-residential development**; and
- + regulate **landscaping** and address **environmental impacts** in commercial and industrial zones.

This jurisdiction scan included the cities of Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Mississauga, Ottawa, and Toronto. The Town of High River was also included in the jurisdiction scan due to their zoning bylaw recently having undergone a significant change to reflect a progressive form-based zoning code.

Most of the cities reviewed experience the same challenges that Edmonton faces. This includes using multiple zones to address different land use intensities and contexts but creating development outcomes that overlap. Most of the zoning bylaws reviewed also included lengthy and complicated regulations to provide guidance for decisions on development.

Some of the innovative practices found included the use of modifiers to address context while also reducing the need for multiple zones to address overarching regulations for specific land uses, as seen in Toronto's Commercial Residential (CR) mixed-use zone. Modifiers act as levers to

manipulate regulations and are often reflected on a zoning map as a number next to a letter that corresponds with a development attribute, such as 'h' for height, or 'f' for floor area. Toronto goes a bit further in using what is referred to as 'Development Standard Sets' to address areas that are more pedestrian-oriented or vehicle-oriented in nature. Each standard set modifies regulations such as height, floor area for specific uses, setbacks, vehicle access and parking locations, and landscaping, among others, to respond to its corresponding urban context.

To address pedestrian safety, some cities use design guides for parking lots, such as Toronto's [Guidelines for Greening Surface Parking Lots](#) and Ottawa's [Vehicle and Parking Design Guidelines](#). High River's zoning bylaw places a greater emphasis on the public realm through regulations that aimed to enhance walkability and the pedestrian experience such as requirements for building articulation, window transparency, restrictions on parking locations, and vehicle access.

GENERAL APPROACH TO ZONES

Three primary directions are proposed to **improve Edmonton's commercial and industrial zones**, including:



Simplify and reduce overlap by consolidating existing standard zones



Increase development certainty and adaptability



Enhance pedestrian safety and livability

These zones will also feature regulations that make development in Edmonton more **climate-resilient**. Possible zoning actions and approaches to integrate climate resilience in the new Zoning Bylaw will be addressed in the [Climate Resilience and Energy Transition discussion paper](#).

To ensure greater food system resilience, urban agricultural activities will be permitted in most commercial and industrial zones, with the exception of zones intended for heavy industrial uses. More information on the proposed directions for agricultural uses is identified in the [Agriculture and Rural Zones discussion paper](#).

Simplify and Consolidate Zones

The majority of employment in Edmonton is accommodated through seven standard commercial zones and five standard industrial zones. These zones permit commercial development in various scales from small main street-style shops to large shopping malls and retail centres. Industrial zones within the city also range in intensity from industrial office parks, warehouses and light manufacturing, to heavy

industrial activities that generate more significant impacts to surrounding areas. Responding to the need to simplify and reduce overlap of the existing zones, while also broadening the development opportunities for what can occur within each zone, Administration proposes the following new commercial and industrial zones as outlined in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Proposed Commercial and Industrial Zones

Summary of Current and Proposed Commercial and Industrial Zones				
	Commercial Zone	Industrial Zones		
	General Commercial	Business Employment	General Industrial	Heavy Industrial
Example Developments				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Corner Stores + Medical Offices + Big Box Retail + Strip Malls + Offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Business Centres/ Offices + Warehouses + Strip Malls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Warehouses + Storage Yards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Land Treatment + Chemical Processing + Hazardous Material Storage
Zoning Category Provision				
Residential	Limited	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted
Commercial	Major Focus	Major Focus	Limited	Limited
Industrial	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Major Focus

The most transformative change is seen in the approach to consolidate seven standard commercial zones into one commercial zone. To support this consolidation, it is proposed that the General Commercial zone will feature contextual design regulations to respond to the surrounding urban or suburban aspects of the location. It is also proposed that the General Commercial zone will apply to areas throughout the city, outside of nodes and corridors. Within the nodes and corridors, as defined by The Draft City Plan, new mixed-use zones will be developed as described in the [Nodes and Corridors discussion paper](#).

Minor shifts are proposed for the industrial zones. Administration proposes to maintain two zones more tailored to industrial uses that have moderate to high off-site impacts, and looks to consolidate the lighter industrial zones into one mixed non-residential zone. A summary of the proposed zones and their current standard zone equivalencies is outlined in [Table 2](#) and [Table 3](#).

Table 2. Proposed Commercial Zone Equivalencies

Commercial Zones			
Proposed Zone	General Purpose of the Zone	Equivalent Zone in current Zoning Bylaw (See Appendix 3 for zone descriptions)	
General Commercial	To provide opportunities for varying scales of commercial development which meet the everyday needs of local and regional shoppers. This zone will be located throughout the city, outside of nodes and corridors areas.	CB1	Low Intensity Business Zone
		CB2	General Business Zone
		CB3	Commercial Mixed Business Zone
		CHY	Highway Corridor Zone
		CNC	Neighbourhood Commercial Convenience Zone
		CO	Commercial Office Zone
		CSC	Shopping Centre Zone

Table 3. Proposed Industrial Zone Equivalencies

Industrial Zones			
Proposed Zone	General Purpose of the Zone	Equivalent Zone in current Zoning Bylaw (See Appendix 3 for zone descriptions)	
Business Employment	To provide opportunities for commercial and industrial businesses which operate in a way that is compatible with any adjacent non-industrial Zone.	IB	Industrial Business Zone
		IL	Light Industrial Zone
General Industrial	To provide opportunities for industrial businesses which are predominantly located within enclosed buildings but may require outdoor areas for storage or limited outdoor operations.	IM	Medium Industrial Zone
		AGI	Industrial Reserve Zone
Heavy Industrial	To provide opportunities for intensive industrial activities with major land use impacts to surrounding properties.	IH	Heavy Industrial Zone

Increase Development Certainty and Adaptability

Administration proposes to create zoning regulations that can maintain and enhance Edmonton's competitiveness for non-residential investment among neighbouring municipalities in the region. To do this, Administration proposes to include a wide range of uses in the General Commercial and Business Employment zones to enable more development opportunities and the ability for businesses to adapt to changing markets. Broader and more inclusive use categories will allow for innovation and flexibility in how businesses conduct their operations and the products they create or the services they provide.

Development of new zones will balance the implication of allowing commercial activities in industrial areas with the policy directions from The Draft City Plan that call for maintaining land supply necessary to support continued industrial growth while also facilitating the intensification of non-residential land along edges to efficiently use existing infrastructure. It is proposed to structure the General Industrial and Heavy Industrial zones to accommodate industrial activities that have moderate to high impacts to maintain the viability of industrial lands for industrial growth. The Business Employment zone will accommodate a wider range of commercial and light industrial activities to enable the intensification of non-residential opportunities along mass transit routes and the edges of industrial areas.

Administration is also proposing minimum ground floor heights for the General Commercial and Business Employment zones and additional height allowances in the Business Employment zones to allow for a smoother transition from commercial to light industrial uses.

Enhancing Pedestrian Safety and Urban Design

In large scale commercial and business industrial areas, development is often auto-oriented, leaving pedestrians having to navigate walking through parking lots, climbing fences, or walking down the side of incomplete roadways and drive-aisles to get to their destination. It is proposed to increase the emphasis on development regulations that create better outcomes for universal accessibility, pedestrian safety, and movement of all users on a site. Increasing pedestrian safety in the commercial and industrial zones will require the introduction of regulations that provide better guidance on pedestrian circulation through the site and connecting to the greater street/pedestrian network. This can include things such as breaking up large parking lots with walkways and landscaping, and requiring development to be located closer to the street in areas of the city where pedestrian and transit infrastructure exists. It is also proposed that tangible and measurable regulations are used to achieve these outcomes.

Where appropriate, Administration proposes to use aspects of the current Major Commercial Corridors Overlay and Main Streets Overlay to inform design regulations to increase the visual appearance of development while also improving pedestrian safety and the interface with the public realm.

General Commercial Zone

The purpose of this zone is to accommodate commercial activities, like retail, offices, and some residential, which meet the everyday needs of residents. This zone will prioritize the pedestrian experience by ensuring development is sensitive to pedestrian safety and universal accessibility. It is anticipated that current Special Area zones, which are commercial in nature, will be rezoned to this standard zone.

Uses

This zone will accommodate a range of commercial development, from low impact commercial activities compatible with residential areas to larger shopping centres and malls. Activities in this zone will predominantly be located within an enclosed building, with limited visual impacts to surrounding properties.

Limited opportunities for residential will be provided in the General Commercial zone; however, regulations to limit the extent of this development will ensure growth occurs in accordance with The Draft City Plan.

Regulations

It is proposed that the General Commercial zone will feature contextual design regulations that ensure that development is sensitive and compatible with a variety of urban and suburban areas.

The safety and experience of the pedestrian will be a major focus in the creation of development rules in this zone. Parking areas developed under this zone will have an emphasis on pedestrian safety accessing sites and buildings and will feature attributes like pedestrian walkways aligned to the building entrance and raised pedestrian crosswalks. Minimum sidewalk widths will be implemented for increased accessibility for all users of the site.

To further promote and enhance the public realm and walkability, buildings will be located on sites close to the street, internal roadways and sidewalks. Based on best practice, setbacks in

these contexts generally are within the range of zero to 4.5 metres, which allows for sidewalk activities to animate the street. In developing these regulations, it is also important to consider future uses and development configurations on a site which can facilitate walkable environments over time. An example of this concept is The Brewery District development site which has the potential to transition into a more walkable environment as street facing buildings may be developed in the future.

Minimum ground floor height regulations are proposed to facilitate main floor retail uses, generally around 4.5 metres, which is used in other cities. Additionally, to ensure that new commercial development is compatible with adjacent residential areas, setbacks from residential areas will be required, generally at a distance of six metres. This is in line with Edmonton's current regulations. In contexts where sites are next to roadways, like expressways and major arterial roads, that are not typically conducive to walkability, development may locate further from the street.

Design elements of the existing Main Streets Overlay and Major Commercial Corridors Overlay will be incorporated into this zone to provide a safe and pleasant experience for shoppers. It is also proposed to include regulations for signs within this zone that are sensitive to walkable and pedestrian oriented areas. It will be encouraged that signs within this zone primarily advertise the products, services and events that can be found along the street. Signs within this zone will be an important tool in promoting local business areas while also respecting the local context and character through higher design standards. Signs located outside of pedestrian oriented contexts are proposed to be regulated at an appropriate scale for auto-oriented areas.

Business Employment Zone

The proposed purpose of this zone is to provide for the needs of light industrial businesses and commercial and industrial offices with minimal impacts on surrounding areas. This zone is intended to replace and enhance the existing Industrial Business (IB) and Light Industrial (IL) zones in the current Zoning Bylaw. The distinction between this zone and the proposed General Commercial zone is that this zone is intended exclusively for non-residential uses.

As this zone is intended to be compatible with non-industrial development, this zone will also act as a transition from more intensive industrial zones, such as the proposed General Industrial zone, to commercial and residential zones. This zone also can be used and applied to create local nodes within the Non-residential Opportunities network identified in The Draft City Plan to support local business areas.

Uses

Activities in this zone will predominantly be located within an enclosed building. Outdoor display areas will be regulated to improve visual appearance from high traffic roadways and minimize impacts to adjacent commercial and residential zones. Proposed activities include offices, workshops, light industrial, food services, and convenience and other small scale retail services to meet the needs of local workers and businesses. This zone will also enable developments that provide services to nearby districts, such as residential areas. Additional regulations are proposed to apply to some uses in order to maintain a high standard of appearance, and ensure nuisances are not generated by light industrial activities occurring on the site.

Regulations

In comparison to the proposed General Industrial zone, a higher standard of design is proposed to be incorporated in the development regulations

of this zone to increase the visual appearance on roads with high visibility and development that contributes to a comfortable and walkable public realm. It is proposed to include regulations that provide clear guidance for landscaping, pedestrian circulation, building articulation, setbacks, and finishing materials for portions of development adjacent to high traffic roadways, non-industrial zones, or in a pedestrian oriented context.

For better integration with other zones and to maintain consistency, front setbacks are proposed to align with the proposed General Commercial zone. This will allow a modest decrease from the current setback requirements of the current Industrial Business (IB) and Light Industrial (IL) zones. This zone will also allow for the development of multi-storey office buildings and light industrial operations, which have associated indoor warehouse and storage areas. A maximum height in the range of four to six storeys is proposed. This is an increase in height from the current Industrial Business and Light Industrial zones; however, additional increases in height are not proposed in order to direct further intensification of commercial development to the Nodes and Corridors Network envisioned by The Draft City Plan.

Currently, the Industrial Business zone is written to allow for commercial uses while intending to maintain land for industrial activities. In some areas of the city, development within this zone is developed exclusively for office and non-industrial businesses. To ensure that these lands still maintain light industrial opportunities, regulations will be used to enable the adaptive reuse of buildings for both commercial and light industrial uses, and will limit some opportunities for commercial developments, such as large format retail stores, by limiting permitted floor area. These large commercial development types will be encouraged in the proposed General Commercial zone.

General Industrial Zone

Through this zone, land will be retained and preserved for Edmonton’s varied employment activities, such as manufacturing, processing, logistics, and distribution. Generally, developments that require larger parcels of land and have moderate off-site impacts to surrounding properties will be located within this zone. The General Industrial zone is also proposed to serve as a buffer between the proposed Heavy Industrial zone and less intensive Business Employment zone.

Uses

Light and medium industrial operations that may generate some off-site impacts like noise or odour are proposed to be permitted within this zone. It is also proposed to permit outdoor storage areas. However, the provision of commercial activity is proposed to be limited only to establishments intended to meet the needs of nearby workers, which will primarily be done through floor area limits. This will minimize development pressures for uses which do not meet the industrial nature of this zone.

Regulations

The permitted height within the General Industrial zone is proposed to accommodate various industrial operations in the range of four to six storeys. To ensure long term viability for industrial operations within this zone, floor area restrictions will be applied to Indoor Sales and Service conditional uses. As this zone focuses on providing areas for light and medium industrial operations, it will have visual impacts on surrounding properties. Landscaping is proposed to be required next to roads, similar to current regulations, and enhanced building design will provide identification of building entrances.

Heavy Industrial Zone

This proposed zone will reduce barriers to businesses that require intensive use of land and generate off-site impacts such as noise and odour, or other risks from the use and production of dangerous goods, by providing flexible design requirements and land use activities.

Uses

A range of industrial uses will be permitted in this zone to increase the certainty of industrial investment within these areas. This zone will accommodate activities that will have impacts to surrounding properties, through the presence of noise, odour or large, intensive outdoor storage areas. Examples of activities which would be located in this zone include chemical processing plants, refinery plants and large scale manufacturing operations.

Regulations

To ensure that the Heavy Industrial is responsive and adaptable to a variety of current and emerging industries, height allowances will be increased to accommodate various operations. This zone will feature landscaping and setbacks, which will be developed with an environmental focus.



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Directing job growth to the nodes and corridors areas is a significant goal envisioned by The Draft City Plan. As regulations for the Business Employment zone are developed, maintaining the balance between permitting employment activities within this zone and attracting new growth to nodes and corridors is important.

There is a risk that if regulations are too flexible within this zone, it will divert from the plan to accommodate new jobs within the Nodes and Corridors Network. For more information on the proposed direction for the mixed-use zones in the nodes and corridors please refer to the [Nodes and Corridors discussion paper](#).

ZONE SUMMARIES

The following is a high-level overview of the proposed zones. A description of the uses listed within each of the zones is included in [Appendix 2](#) in this paper.

General Commercial Zone

General Purpose

The purpose of this zone is to accommodate retail, office and limited residential activities that meet the everyday needs of residents. Development within this zone ranges from low impact commercial activities with opportunities for residential uses, to larger shopping centres and malls. This zone prioritizes the pedestrian experience through development that is sensitive to pedestrian safety and universal accessibility. Contextual design regulations in the zone respond to the surrounding urban or suburban aspects of the location. This standard zone is generally located throughout the city, outside of the nodes and corridors network.

Permitted Uses

- + Agricultural
- + Indoor Sales and Service
- + Food, Cultural, and Entertainment
- + Civic Services
- + Special Events
- + Signs

Conditional Uses

- + Residential
- + Outdoor Sales and Service

Site Regulations

- + Setbacks ranging from 0 to 4.5 metres from front and flanking lot lines, as well as internal roadways and sidewalks, in pedestrian oriented contexts
- + Setbacks from 4.5 – 6 metres from front and flanking roadways in vehicle oriented contexts
- + Side and rear setbacks of 6 metres when adjacent to residential zones

Development Regulations

- + Building heights limited to 1 – 3 storeys for compatibility with small scale residential zones
- + Minimum ground floor heights of 4.5 metres
- + Design regulations for parking areas with safe and accessible pedestrian walkways that are raised and aligned with building entrances and that have minimum sidewalk widths
- + Building entrances oriented to the main road and/or public sidewalk
- + General landscaping requirements next to roads
- + Limits for Residential uses, including location (above commercial) and density, in order to direct growth to residential areas or the nodes and corridors areas, as directed by The Draft City Plan

Performance criteria

- + Environmental performance regulations as appropriate to zone

Business Employment Zone

General Purpose

The purpose of this zone is to accommodate high quality light industrial, office, commercial, and civic service developments that carry out their operations in a manner where no nuisance is created or apparent outside an enclosed building. This zone is intended to be compatible with any adjacent non-industrial zone, while also serving as a transition zone to buffer adjacent higher intensity industrial zones. This zone is generally located on the periphery of industrial areas, adjacent to arterial or major roadways, or along corridors supported by mass transit.

Permitted Uses

- + Agricultural
- + Civic Services
- + Food, Cultural, and Entertainment
- + Indoor Sales and Service
- + Minor Industrial
- + Special Events
- + Signs

Conditional Uses

- + Outdoor Sales and Service
- + Public Utility

Site Regulations

- + Setbacks ranging from 0 to 4.5 metres from front and flanking lot lines based on adjacent road type for pedestrian oriented contexts
- + Setbacks ranging from 3 – 6 metres from front and flanking roadways in vehicle oriented contexts to match adjacent industrial zones or increased setback on high traffic roadways
- + Side and rear setbacks of 6 metres when adjacent to residential zones

Development Regulations

- + Height limits in the range of 4 – 6 storeys to enable adaptive reuse of buildings for non-industrial and industrial activities
- + Minimum ground floor heights of 4.5 metres
- + Stepback requirements for development above 2 – 3 storeys for pedestrian oriented contexts
- + Floor space limits for Indoor Sales and Services
- + Building articulation and finishes, window transparency at the ground level, and landscaping for portions of development facing non-industrial zones and high visibility arterial and collector roadways, and pedestrian oriented contexts
- + Limits on surface parking to the sides and rear of buildings where in pedestrian oriented contexts
- + Surface parking areas divided to limit continuous rows of stalls that enable safe pedestrian circulation and sufficient space for walkways and landscaping
- + Vehicular loading and queuing spaces located to the rear or sides of buildings with screening requirements to buffer adjacent non-industrial zones
- + General landscaping requirements next to roads
- + Screening and location regulations for outdoor display areas

Performance criteria

- + Maximum limits for noise, odours, emissions, hazards for Minor Industrial and Public Utility uses
- + Environmental performance regulations as appropriate to zone

General Industrial Zone

General Purpose

The purpose of this zone is to provide for industrial and commercial businesses that require large lots and carry out a portion of their operation outdoors or require outdoor storage areas. Any nuisance associated with such activities generally do not extend beyond the boundaries of the site. This Zone should normally be applied on the interior of industrial areas adjacent to collector and local industrial public roadways, and separated from any adjacent non-industrial zone. This zone also serves as a transition zone to buffer adjacent higher intensity industrial zones.

Permitted Uses

- + Agricultural
- + Minor Industrial
- + Outdoor Sales and Service
- + Public Utility
- + Signs

Conditional Uses

- + Indoor Sales and Service
- + Civic Services
- + Food, Cultural, and Entertainment
- + Special Events

Site Regulations

- + 3 metre setbacks from front and flanking lot lines and lot lines
- + Increased setbacks from non-industrial zones

Development Regulations

- + Height limits in the range of 4 – 6 storeys to enable adaptive reuse of buildings for non-industrial and industrial activities
- + Stepback requirements for development above three storeys for portions of building facing non-industrial zones
- + Floor space limits for conditional uses to maintain industrial viability of zone
- + General landscaping requirements next to roads
- + General building design requirements to enhance and identify building entrances

Performance criteria

- + Standards for noise, odours, emissions, hazards for industrial and commercial activities to minimize off-site nuisances
- + Environmental performance regulations as appropriate to zone

Heavy Industrial Zone

General Purpose

The purpose of this zone is to provide for intensive industrial activities that, due to their appearance, noise, odour, risk of toxic emissions, or fire and explosion hazards are incompatible with non-industrial and minor industrial uses. This zone is generally located on the interior of industrial or agricultural areas, such that it does not interfere with the safety, use, amenity or enjoyment of any surrounding zones.

Permitted Uses

- + Major Industrial
- + Public Utility
- + Signs

Conditional Uses

- + Indoor Sales and Service
- + Civic Services
- + Food, Cultural, and Entertainment
- + Outdoor Sales and Service
- + Special Events

Site Regulations

- + 3 metre setbacks from front and flanking lot lines and lot lines

Development Regulations

- + General height limits in the range of 6 storeys to enable a wide range of intensive industrial activities; increased height limits for specific industrial activities, such as smokestacks, in the range of 18 to 20 storeys
- + General landscaping requirements next to roads
- + General building design requirements to enhance and identify building entrances

Sign Regulations

- + All types of signs, except for rooftop signs, would be allowed in this zone
- + The number of signs permitted on a site would be regulated.
- + Lit signs could be allowed, but would need to be located and sized so that it does not negatively affect or pose a safety hazard to the surrounding area

Performance criteria

- + Environmental performance regulations as appropriate to zone

NEXT STEPS

Creating simplified commercial and industrial zoning regulations, and consolidating existing zones **will provide increased certainty for investment and support, and strengthen Edmonton's economy**. Providing new zones responsive to industry needs are key as the City prepares for an additional **520,000 jobs** across the city when Edmonton reaches two million people. Through new zones, **the daily experience of workers and shoppers in these areas will be improved** as increased pedestrian safety will be a major focus in developing new commercial and industrial regulations.

These proposed zones and regulations are a first attempt at creating a new Zoning Bylaw. This project will require input from **residents, businesses, and many others** to help refine and improve these ideas to ensure the final regulations will achieve the goals of developing zoning regulations which support and strengthen Edmonton's commercial and industrial landscape.



GET INVOLVED!

- Submit your feedback about this discussion paper at engaged.edmonton.ca
- Visit edmonton.ca/zoningbylawrenewal
- For all other ideas and feedback regarding Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative, please use the [General Feedback Form](#)
- Subscribe to our [newsletter](#)
- Contact us at zoningbylawrenewal@edmonton.ca



Appendix 1 | Draft City Plan Policies Applicable to Commercial and Industrial Zones

I want to LIVE in a place that feels like home		
Intention	2.1.2	Support the physical and mental health of Edmontonians by integrating housing, services, amenities and natural systems with active transportation networks.
Direction	2.1.2.3	Manage the impact of environmental stressors on people and natural systems including excessive noise, air and light pollution.
Intention	2.1.3	Ensure that development occurs in an orderly and safe manner to protect public health and the environment.
Direction	2.1.3.3	Manage risk associated with heavy industry, oil and gas facilities, pipelines, railway corridors, utilities and utility corridors (see map 13 – Development Influences and Constraints).
Intention	2.3.1	Promote opportunities to accommodate growth through the compact development of new and existing neighbourhoods.
Direction	2.3.1.1	Identify opportunities to facilitate redevelopment and intensification of industrial and commercial lands in established non-residential areas supported by mass transit.
Direction	2.3.1.2	Encourage residential and nonresidential redevelopment that contributes to the livability and adaptability of districts.

I want opportunities to THRIVE		
Intention	3.2.1	Ensure that development and public infrastructure is designed to support a vibrant local economy and competitive business environment
Direction	3.2.1.2	Enable growth of new and emerging sectors in Edmonton’s non-residential areas (see map 5– Non-Residential Opportunities Network).
Direction	3.2.1.6	Encourage innovative servicing solutions that support the growth and evolution of industrial lands.
Intention	3.2.2	Promote the attraction and retention of a highly skilled and talented workforce in support of ongoing innovation, investment and entrepreneurship.
Direction	3.2.2.2	Provide pedestrian connections, amenities and facilities to support employees in non-residential areas.
Intention	3.3.1	Support opportunity for local economic and community resilience through development, revitalization and renewal.
Intention	3.3.2	Promote the continuous improvement, evolution and intensification of Edmonton’s non-residential lands.
Direction	3.3.2.1	Maintain land supply necessary to support continued industrial growth.
Direction	3.3.2.2	Facilitate the intensification of non-residential areas including commercial and mixed uses along their edges to efficiently use existing infrastructure.
Direction	3.3.2.5	Encourage land reclamation and restoration after resource extraction and landfill activities to enable subsequent redevelopment for compatible land uses.

I want ACCESS within my city

Intention	4.1.2	Ensure safety of all users in the planning and design of city infrastructure, networks and spaces.
Direction	4.1.2.1	Prioritize safe streets and convenient pedestrian crossings that appropriately serve the context of the area.
Intention	4.3.1	Ensure that the mobility system enables the efficient movement of people and goods within Edmonton and the Metropolitan Region.
Direction	4.3.1.1	Enable a comprehensive and adaptive urban freight environment to serve goods movement, services and delivery while mitigating negative community, environmental and safety impacts (see map 8 – Roadway and Goods Movement).
Direction	4.3.1.3	Enable and expand non-residential opportunities by strategically investing in transportation infrastructure.
Intention	4.3.2	Promote regional connectivity and shared prosperity through coordination, communication and advocacy.
Direction	4.3.2.2	Strengthen workforce access to employment areas through transit investment.

I want to be able to CREATE and innovate

Intention	6.3.3	Promote partnerships that develop regional opportunities for growth and investment.
Direction	6.3.3.4	Advance Edmonton's role as a major transportation, logistics, and employment hub within the national and international economies.
Intention	6.4.1	Promote economic development opportunities to support energy transition.
Direction	6.4.1.1	Encourage innovation to reduce non-residential process energy and carbon footprint.

Appendix 2 | Proposed Uses and General Descriptions for Reference in the Commercial and Industrial Zones

Use	Description	Some Examples
Residential	Any building specifically designed for people to live in.	Houses, Apartments etc.
Indoor Sales and Services	Any activity occurring in a building; no off-site impacts or impacts contained in the building	Retail stores, offices, salons, doctors clinics, makerspaces, etc.
Outdoor Sales and Services	Activities that primarily occur outside and have some off-site impacts	Car repair shops, car sales, greenhouses, businesses with outdoor storage.
Minor Industrial	Activities that have some off-site impacts and require some specific regulations to deal with the impacts	Cannabis production facilities, light manufacturing or carpentry businesses, city yards (transit and fleet depots).
Major Industrial	Activities that cause significant impacts to the surrounding areas	Oil and gas processing facilities, landfills, wastewater treatment centres
Food, Cultural, and Entertainment	Spaces where people come together for entertainment, food and drink, or recreational purposes. Occurs at a variety of scales and requires regulations to minimize impacts appropriate to the zones.	Restaurants, pubs, cafes, nightclubs, theatres, concert halls, church, stadium, etc.
Civic Services	Activities or uses that provide a public service but can have impacts to the surrounding areas	Schools, libraries, day cares, rec facilities, prisons, hospitals, fire stations, police stations, transit centre, City Hall
Public Utility	Spaces, buildings, structures, or facilities that provide common utilities to neighbourhoods and the city overall. Require regulations to minimize impacts appropriate to the zone.	Utility corridors and substation, solar facilities, stormwater ponds.
Special Events Temporary Uses	Temporary activities that occur in a space. Require regulations to minimize impacts appropriate to the zone.	Festivals, pop-up shops, business/customer appreciation events
Agriculture	Any activity associated with raising animals or growing plants, except for Cannabis. Allows the sale of agricultural products raised or growing on site; Accessory products permitted to be sold.	Produce farms, hobby farms, animal breeding facilities, or animal boarding facilities.
Signs	May be part of a structure or devices, freestanding or on a building, and is used to convey information or to advertise	Freestanding signs, or signs on buildings.

Appendix 3 | General Descriptions of Existing Commercial and Industrial Standard Zones

Existing Standard Zones	
Commercial Zones	General Purpose
Low Intensity Business Zone (CB1)	Low intensity commercial, office and service uses located along arterial roadways that border residential areas. Development shall be sensitive and in scale with existing development along the commercial street and any surrounding residential neighbourhood.
General Business Zone (CB2)	Businesses that require large Sites and a location with good visibility and accessibility along, or adjacent to, major public roadways.
Commercial Mixed Business Zone (CB3)	Mixed-use zone to provide for a range of medium intensity Commercial Uses as well as enhance opportunities for residential development in locations near high capacity transportation nodes, including Transit Avenues or other locations offering good accessibility. This Zone is not intended to accommodate "big box" style commercial development that utilizes significant amounts of surface parking, nor is it intended to be located abutting any Zone that allows Single Detached Housing as a Permitted Use, without appropriate site interface provisions.
Highway Corridor Zone (CHY)	Provide for high quality commercial development along those public roadways, which serve as entrance routes to the City or along limited access public roadways intended to provide a connection to entrance routes.
Neighbourhood Commercial Convenience Zone (CNC)	Convenience commercial and personal service uses, which are intended to serve the day-to-day needs of residents within residential neighbourhoods.
Commercial Office Zone (CO)	Medium intensity office, commercial and residential development in the inner city, around Light Rail Transit station areas or other locations offering good accessibility by both private automobile and transit.
Shopping Centre Zone (CSC)	Larger shopping centre developments intended to serve a community or regional trade area. Residential, office, entertainment and cultural uses may also be included within such shopping complexes.

Existing Standard Zones	
Industrial Zones	General Purpose
Industrial Business Zone (IB)	Industrial businesses that carry out their operations such that no nuisance is created or apparent outside an enclosed building and such that the Zone is compatible with any adjacent non-industrial Zone, and to accommodate limited, compatible non-industrial businesses. This Zone should normally be located on the periphery of industrial areas and adjacent to arterial or major collector roadways.
Industrial Reserve Zone (AGI)	Agricultural and rural Uses that do not prejudice future Use when the lands are required for Industrial Use.
Light Industrial Zone (IL)	High quality, light industrial developments that operate in such a manner that no nuisance factor is created or apparent outside an enclosed building. Limited outdoor activities (loading, service, storage, etc.) that are accessory to a principal Use may occur providing the scale of such activities does not unduly conflict with the primary purpose of this Zone or dominate the Use of the site. This Zone is intended for sites located on, or in proximity to, arterial or collector roadways within an industrial area; or wherever required to implement the objectives of a Plan or Use study.
Medium Industrial Zone (IM)	Manufacturing, processing, assembly, distribution, service and repair Uses that carry out a portion of their operation outdoors or require outdoor storage areas. Any nuisance associated with such Uses should not generally extend beyond the boundaries of the Site. This Zone should normally be applied on the interior of industrial areas adjacent to collector and local industrial public roadways such that Uses are separated from any adjacent residential areas by a higher quality Industrial or Commercial Zone.
Heavy Industrial Zone (IH)	Industrial Uses that, due to their appearance, noise, odour, risk of toxic emissions, or fire and explosion hazards are incompatible with residential, commercial, and other land Uses. This Zone should normally be located on the interior of industrial or agricultural areas, such that it does not interfere with the safety, Use, amenity or enjoyment of any surrounding Zones.

ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE

Edmonton

