

# District Planning

Conversation Starter #1

What is the District Planning Project?





### **How to Use the Conversation Starters**

The **Conversation Starters** are mini information packages that introduce Edmontonians to District Planning and explore key topics. There are six Conversation Starters. Each is dedicated to a different aspect of the project. We encourage Edmontonians to explore all topics to learn more about District Planning and help prepare them for upcoming public engagement.

# **Conversation Starter Topics**

- + What is the District Planning Project?
- + What are the District General Policy and the District Plans?
- + How are the District General Policy and the District Plans being Drafted?
- + How will Edmontonians Provide Input?
- + How are the District General Policy and District Plans Intended to be Used?
- + How will the District General Policy and District Plans be Monitored and Updated?



# **Table of Contents**

How to Use the Conversation Starters	
Conversation Starter Topics	2
Table of Contents	3
Introduction	4
Why Introduce a New Planning Tool?	4
The Planning System	5
Fundamentals of the	
Planning System	5
Participating in the Planning System	7
Updating Edmonton's Planning System	7
The City Plan & District Planning	8
Why Districts	8
The 15 Minute Concept	9
What the District Planning Project Will Do	10
Considering All Edmontonians	11
Get Involved	11



### Introduction

The City Plan looks into the future and tells us what decisions we need to make so Edmonton can welcome another one million people. It's a long term vision that considers Edmonton's neighbourhoods as districts which offer vibrant and diverse places for people to live, work and play. Before we get to two million people, we need to set up District Planning in Edmonton.

This District Planning project is about building 15 district plans for each of The City Plan's districts and focuses on welcoming the first 250,000 people. The City Plan sets the direction and district plans will help clarify where and how each district will grow. This means we need to look at the existing area plans we have and how they fit within The City Plan's vision.

Each district plan will guide how neighbourhoods will physically change over time and will help to support Edmontonians' desire to live more locally in a "Community of Communities" — one of The City Plan's Big City Moves. This is where Edmontonians can meet most of their needs within a 15 minute walk, roll, bicycle ride or transit trip from their home.

In this Conversation Starter, we are going to talk about:

- + Edmonton's planning system
- + What The City Plan is
- + How District Planning will help us achieve The City Plan
- + What this District Planning project will do

### Why Introduce a New Planning Tool?

All tools need to align with The City Plan. The City Plan is our new Municipal Development Plan and Transportation Master Plan approved by Edmonton City Council in 2020 that provides strategic direction for how Edmonton will grow and redevelop to 2 million people. This means The City Plan tells us what information Edmonton's first district plans need to cover to get to 1.25 million people.



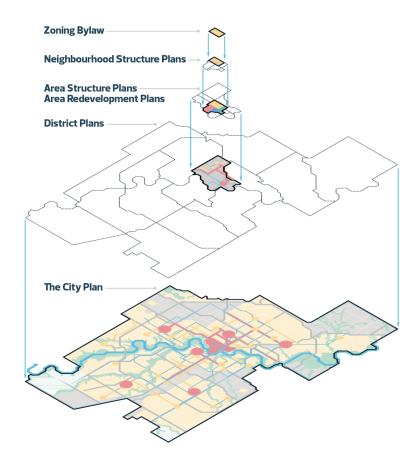
Before we continue, here are a few definitions to key terms that appear in this Conversation Starter:

- Land use: refers to different ways land can be used, developed or categorized in our city. For example, residential land uses refer to where people live, commercial land uses where businesses or stores are predominantly located and mixed uses refer to where residential and commercial are combined.
- **Mobility:** refers to how people and goods move through our city and can refer to our roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes, mass transit routes and infrastructure.
- Growth Activation: refers to initiatives, projects or investments that can support or stimulate the construction of utility or mobility infrastructure or new residential or commercial buildings in targeted locations.

# **The Planning System**

# Fundamentals of the Planning System

In Alberta, cities must develop and follow a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to guide how their city will grow. These documents set the vision and cities need planning tools to help carry out their directions. Cities can develop tools that will guide decisions citywide or for specific areas of the city. Policies and zoning are two of the fundamental tools that shape a city.





### Types of Planning Tools:

Planning Tool	Where it Applies	Legal Status
The City Plan	Citywide	Statutory
Strategies & Guidelines	Citywide	Non-Statutory
Geographic Plans Category		
Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs)	Specific neighbourhoods in the Redeveloping Area*	Statutory
Area Structure Plans (ASPs)	Multiple Neighbourhoods in Developing Area*	Statutory
Neighbourhood Area Structure Plans (NASPs)	Specific neighbourhoods in Developing Areas	Statutory
Neighbourhood Structure Plans (NSPs)	One Neighbourhood in the Developing Area	Statutory
Regulatory Tools		
Zoning Bylaw	Site Level	Statutory

<sup>\*</sup> The Redeveloping Area and Developing Area are two of the three broad development pattern areas identified in The City Plan (See <a href="https://example.com/The-City Plan Map 9">The City Plan Map 9</a>).

### **What Does Statutory Mean?**

A statutory planning tool can only be created or changed by City Council decision. These plans contain policies to guide or direct how the area should change over time or sets the rules for what types of buildings or uses can happen on a property.



### **Participating in the Planning System**

The planning system works when everyone can participate in sharing their voice and ideas. There are many different and overlapping ways Edmontonians can participate in the planning system. When different City departments start new policy or infrastructure projects, Edmontonians can help shape these projects so they are successful and we can achieve our city-building goals.

Check out **Conversation Starter #4: How will Edmontonians Provide Input?** to learn more about how you can provide input into the District Planning project.

## **Updating Edmonton's Planning System**

<u>The City Plan</u> describes the choices we need to make to become a healthy, urban and climate-resilient city of two million people that supports a prosperous region. This vision will take Edmonton several decades to achieve, but groundwork starts now.

As a first step, The City reviewed all of its area plans and strategies and repealed those that had served their purpose or contained out-of-date directions. A total of 75 area plans and strategies have been repealed so far, reducing the total number from 200 to 125.

Next, the City will implement a process for creating, updating and repealing land use plans to ensure our planning system stays up to date. District plans will play a key role in this work. They will become the primary planning tool, making the planning process easier to use and understand. Having a simplified and streamlined process will also help ensure the City makes consistent and informed development decisions. Over time, District plans will replace older area plans and house newer area plans. District plans will guide how the zoning bylaw will change and how development should look and feel.

The City Plan has also prompted a chance to update our zoning bylaw. Learn more about the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative <u>here</u>.



Subdividing land or getting a building permit, while outside the scope of the District Planning project, are also part of the planning system. Learn more <u>here</u>.

### The City Plan & District Planning

### **Why Districts**

The City Plan gives us lots of wide-ranging direction for Edmonton's long-term future. But we need more detailed guidance to help us make planning decisions now and the years to come. Providing that direction at a neighbourhood scale (as we may have in the past) isn't feasible as Edmonton has over 400 neighbourhoods. The City Plan introduced districts as a new planning geography and laid out Edmonton's district boundaries so we can plan for the future in a new way.

<u>"Planning Districts: Philosophy and Boundary Rationale"</u> was one of many different studies that helped to inform the <u>Making of the The City Plan</u>.

District boundaries are different than the City's <u>ward boundaries</u>. To learn what district you're in check out <u>Districts at A Glance</u>.

Edmontonians shared during The City Plan's engagement about how they want to live in their "community" and District Planning is all about achieving this aspiration. Here's what we heard Edmontonians want:

- + To live in a community where they can easily get groceries for dinner, where their kids can safely ride their bike to school, and where they can take a short transit ride to work.
- + To ensure that all neighbourhoods continue to be desirable places to live by planning and preparing for increasing density in key areas.



- + To have fun and recharge in the river valley and local parks which support biodiversity and provide physical and mental benefits.
- + To have a choice about how they get around it might be more pleasant to travel by foot, bike or transit to get to work, pick up groceries, go to the park, run errands or pick up a coffee.

These ideas make up The City Plan's Big City Move of a "Community of Communities." District Planning looks at Edmontonians' needs and wants, and sees how they can access it within their neighbourhood or in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

### **The 15 Minute Concept**

A "Community of Communities" connects to the 15-minute community concept. This is an idea where a city's residents are able to meet most of their needs within a 15 minute walk, bicycle ride or transit trip from their home. It is where people can walk to get groceries, kids can walk or bike to school, families have parks close by to play and recharge in or where people can take transit to work.

Living closer to what we need means we rely less on our cars to travel which means less greenhouse gas emissions. It also means spending more time in our local community and increasing our connections with our neighbours.

The 15-minute concept is not meant to limit people to access what they need only in their district or to measure the time travelled across a district. The concept is a guide to support living locally and encourages a mix of land uses and options in how we travel.

# What the District Planning Project Will Do

The District Planning project will create 16 new statutory plans, which are divided into two main components:

### + A District General Policy

- will provide guidance that applies to all districts across the city at a level under The City Plan.
- The intention is to be more equitable, have common policies for all districts and remove redundancies (i.e. the same policy repeated or contained in multiple plans).



### + 15 district plans

- Each district plan will apply information and direction from The City Plan at the district level. This will be shown through a series of maps depicting the interdependent elements of the city such as land use, mobility and open space.
- District plans are to be read together with the District General Policy and may contain additional specific policy guidance necessary to further guide that district.

Growth and redevelopment take time and neighbourhood change can be both welcoming and challenging. The City Plan provides direction on how Edmonton should grow from 1 million to 2 million Edmontonians. To support this goal, it highlights four population milestones to stage and phase growth. District plans will guide change to the first population horizon of 1.25 million.

Since district plans will focus on the 1.25 million milestone, they'll incorporate direction from The City Plan (and in some cases existing plans that align with it) and will not create new policy directions. As a result, they'll reflect city building outcomes -- more infill, active transportation infrastructure, access to open space -- that Council and Edmontonains have been advocating for a number of years.

District plans will use broad land use categories to provide more flexible planning direction. Many existing plans can be very prescriptive, and residents feel let down when their plans are changed to allow for development that doesn't exactly match the plan. District plans will still provide clear direction, but will allow for more varied development outcomes without requiring frequent changes.

### **Considering All Edmontonians**

Similar to The City Plan, District Planning will matter to and serve to benefit all Edmontonians:

+ For **residents**, district plans will show where redevelopment is encouraged and how their district is anticipated to change based on The City Plan.



- + For **industry and the business community**, district plans will be that policy link between The City Plan and the Zoning Bylaw, and where investment and development will be encouraged.
- + For **institutions and partners**, district plans will help with their own planning and investment efforts, creating more opportunities for alignment with the City Plan.
- + For **Administration and Council**, they will provide a consolidated source of policies to inform land use, mobility and infrastructure recommendations and decisions.

A GBA+ equity lens is being applied so District Planning engagement intentionally includes marginalized individuals or groups and adopts best practices for diversity and inclusion. We want to broaden our understanding of how District Planning matters and is intended to serve the Edmonton community.

### **Get Involved**

Check out the other Conversation Starters to learn more about:

- + What are the District General Policy and the district plans?
- + How are the District General Policy and the district plans being drafted?
- + How will Edmontonians provide input?
- + How are the District General Policy and District Plans Intended to be Used?
- + How will the District General Policy and district plans be monitored and updated?

Visit edmonton.ca/districtplanning to learn more or contact us at districtplanning@edmonton.ca or through 311.