District Planning

Conversation Starter #5

How are the District General Policy and the District Plans Intended to be Used?

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?

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Introduction

The District Planning project will help guide how new development can happen in communities and what kind of buildings get built and where. This guidance will be contained in the project's two main components: the District General Policy and the district plans. Whether you are a developer or resident, both documents will show how neighbourhoods are encouraged to physically change.

In this Conversation Starter, we're going to talk about:

+ How district plans fit into Edmonton's planning system
+ How to use the District General Policy and district plans together
+ How each section in the District General Policy and district plan work together to help you and City Council make a decision on what and where we build, and how we move and grow

> **Check out Conversation Starters #1 and #2 to learn more about the project, the District General Policy and district plans.**
> As a recap, the District General Policy guides change across the city by setting out policy objectives for planning projects. District plans point to where the policies in the District General Policy apply and how these policies connect to one another through maps and district-specific policy.

Importance of the District Planning Project

The District Planning project's objective is to update and simplify Edmonton's planning system. We have hundreds of area plans that vary in complexity or are out of date. Under a complicated planning system a city might experience:

+ Frequent amendments to area plans so it is up to date with current policy or development practice
+ Less predictability for residents and landowners as area plan policies become out of date and conflict with higher order plans like The City Plan
+ Delays or risk of not achieving city-buildings outcomes because policies become out of date and conflict with The City Plan

As Edmonton transitions from hundreds of area plans to 15 district plans, the Edmonton planning system will become more predictable, efficient and effective so it can direct and inform the long-term build-out of the city.

How District Plans Fit in Edmonton's Planning System

Like all cities, Edmonton has a planning system that is made up of policies and regulations that guides how we use land, where and what we build, and how we move and grow. District plans and the District General Policy will be new statutory planning tools. They will follow the direction of The City Plan.

The District General Policy and district plans will:

+ Guide development alongside area plans like Area Structure Plans (ASPs), Neighbourhood Structure Plans (NSPs), Neighbourhood Area Structure Plans (NASPs) or Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs) (see below for more details).
+ Influence the Zoning Bylaw, its regulations and guide its future amendments.
+ Guide City staff on rezoning recommendations and development permit applications.

For more information on Edmonton's planning system and the various components, please see **Conversation Starter #1**.

District plans will communicate what other area plans (like ASPs, ARPs, NSPs, etc.) you need to reference for additional planning direction and where they are located in the district. Right now, Edmonton has hundreds of planning documents across the city and we want to make sure it is clear which documents you need to reference or where they apply.

District plans work with other planning tools to provide land use, land development, mobility and growth management direction.

What about The City Plan's Developing Areas or Future Growth Areas?
When district plans are in place, future growth areas and developing areas will continue to be planned with ASPs, NSPs or NASPs. These types of area plans provide more detailed, technical direction than district plans, like where sewer lines should go. Once adopted, the district plan will be updated so it communicates where these new area plans are located.

As future planning work happens, any new area plan or changes to existing area plans need to follow the direction in the District General Policy and relevant district plan.

More information may be found in Section 1.2 of the draft District General Policy.

Existing Area Plans AND District Plans

Edmonton has a lot of existing area plans like ASPs, NSPs, ARPs, etc. These area plans are older and came before the district plans and the District General Policy to guide how a neighbourhood should develop or redevelop.

With the introduction of district plans, some area plans will be recommended for repeal as the direction they provide may be out of date or not aligned with The City Plan. Other area plans will be retained because their direction is still relevant or aligned with The City Plan.

In areas with a retained area plan, it will be referenced in a district plan's Table 4.1: District Specific Policy Table and Figure 6.6: Land Use Concept.

The direction from a retained area plan will overrule the direction in the district plans and District General Policy because they were approved before the district plans. This means that if there are any differences between the district plans or District General Policy and the other area plans, then decisions need to follow the direction in the area plan rather than the district plans.

City Plan   Existing ASP, ARP or NSP   District Planning   Zoning Bylaw
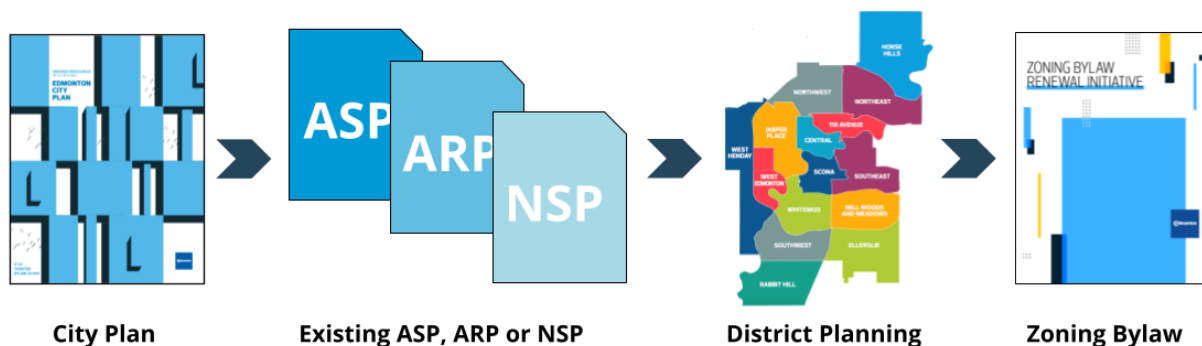
Look to **Conversation Starter #3** to learn more about how the District General Policy and district plans are being drafted.

Area with ONLY a District Plan

If you live in an area without another area plan, then you will seek direction only from your district plan and the District General Policy.

City Plan → **District Planning** → **Zoning Bylaw**

Using the District Plans and the District General Policy

There are lots of different ways you can use the District General Policy and district plans to understand what planning and design, mobility and growth management outcomes the City encourages. Depending on which district you live in or are interested in, you will need to read that district plan and the District General Policy together:

+ You are submitting an application to rezone a property
+ You want to amend an existing area plan
+ You want to learn more about how a property on your street might redevelop
+ The street you take to work is being renewed and you want learn what policies may be guiding the changes
+ A land use study is being done on a nearby node or corridor and you want to participate in upcoming engagement

In the sections below, we will walk you through how the district plans and District General Policy are intended to be used and how the different sections relate to one another.

Check out **Conversation Starter #2** to get a detailed understanding of the district plan components.

Step by Step Guide

Step 1: Pick a spot on the map → **Step 2:** Look at what the maps tell you → **Step 3:** Look to the District General Policy → **Step 4:** Look to Section 4 of the district plan → **Step 5:** Look at all the policies together to find out what type of development the policies support.
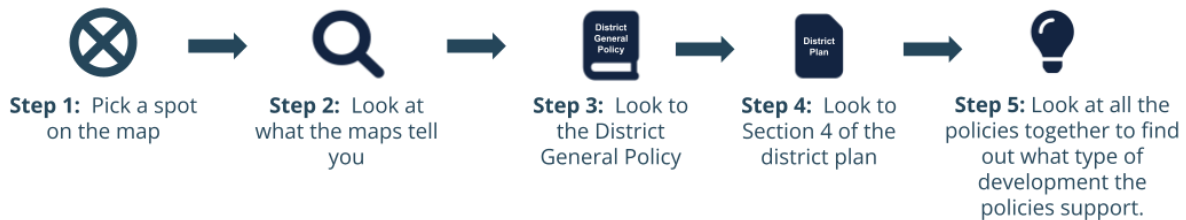
The steps below outline how we recommend you use the district plans and the District General Policy. It is important that you do the following to make sure you have the complete direction and guidance:

+ Read the District General Policy and the district plan together. The district plan identifies the 'where' and the District General Policy identifies the 'what, why and how.'
+ Read and consider all of the policies in the District General Policy together as they apply to your need

Step 1: Pick a spot on the district plan maps

Whether you are rezoning a site or your nearby corridor is being redeveloped, you need to find it on the district plan maps (Figure 6.1 to Figure 6.10).

Step 2: Look at what the maps tell you

Make note of the following as it relates to the spot you are looking at:

+ What map features do you see?
+ What map features overlap?
+ What map features are nearby?
+ Is there another area plan you need to reference?

Figure 6.6: Land Use Concept map of your district plan shows whether there is another area plan you need to reference.

For example, features for the site you are looking at may include: it being a node or corridor, it's designated as the urban mix land use category, it's near a greenway or mass transit station, along a particular road type or adjacent to a designated heritage building.
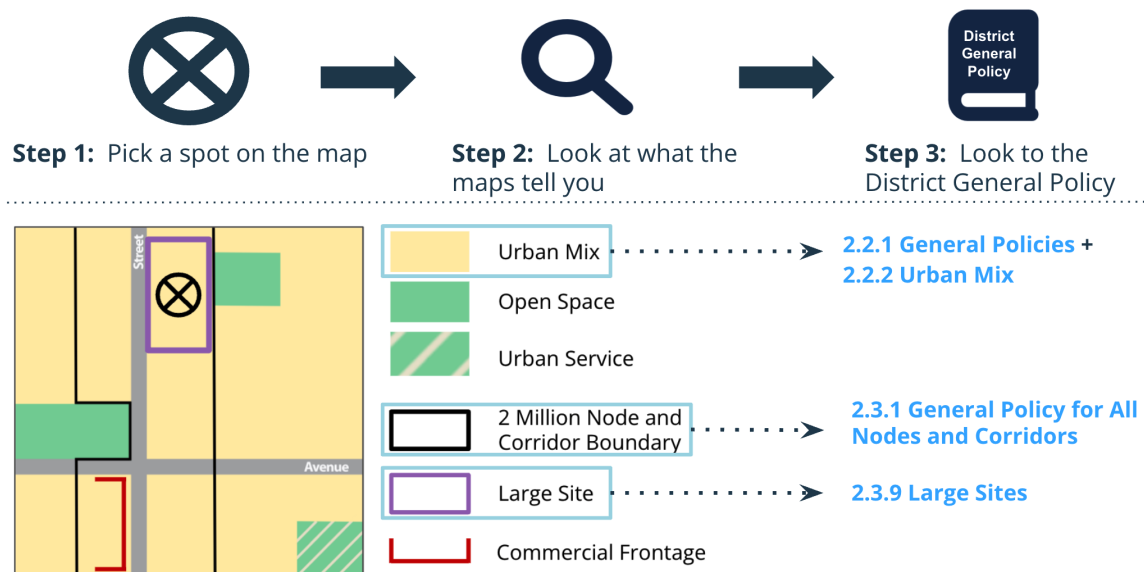
Use the legend in the map to help you understand what the features mean and what you need to consider.

Check out the Glossary in the District General Policy if you want to understand what each map feature means and its definition.

Step 3: Look to the District General Policy

The image below shows that most of the map features have their own dedicated section in the District General Policy. You will need to find and review those sections in the District General Policy that match the map features you noted in Step 2.

Step 1: Pick a spot on the map

Step 2: Look at what the maps tell you

Step 3: Look to the District General Policy

Urban Mix	**2.2.1 General Policies +**
	2.2.2 Urban Mix
Open Space	
Urban Service	
2 Million Node and Corridor Boundary	**2.3.1 General Policy for All Nodes and Corridors**
Large Site	**2.3.9 Large Sites**
Commercial Frontage	

Read each applicable section from the District General Policy and consider all of the policies together to get the full picture on what type of development is encouraged. Some policies may not apply depending on whether it is a land use or mobility project.

What about the District General Policy sections that are not shown on the maps?
Depending on the type of planning work, there are extra sections in the District General Policy you will need to consider.
   + Section 2.1: District Urban Design - this is for rezonings, building design and roadway renewal projects. It also guides how districts, neighbourhoods, blocks and properties are organised.
   + Chapter 4.0: Growth Management and Growth Activation - this Chapter is all about managing how we grow, prioritizing targeted locations for City investment and making sure we consider risk factors like flooding or rail lines.

Most chapters in the District General Policy include policies that are general to the topic. For example, 2.2.1 General Policies under land use or 2.5.1 General Policies for Open Space and Natural Areas. Make sure to look at these general policies in addition to the sections you found on the district plan maps.

The District General Policy also references other planning documents that may be relevant to your spot, like the Winter City Design Guidelines.

Step 4: Look at the district plan and whether there are any district-specific policies applicable to your spot

Section 4 of your district plan lists any extra policies or area plans to consider for specific areas of the district.

Find your spot on Figure 4.1 District Subarea and note the subarea code.

Then, look for the subarea code in Table 4.1 District Specific Policy Table of a district plan where any extra policies can be found.

If you do not see that subarea code listed in Table 4.1 then there are no extra district-specific policies to consider.

If you do see your subarea code, look to the column 'Area Description' to find where the policy applies in that subarea. There may be extra figures/maps at the bottom of Section 4 to help you narrow in on where these extra policies apply.

MN = Major Node
DN = District Node
PC = Primary Corridor
SC = Secondary Corridor
RP = Residential Area with Plan
R = Residential Area
E = Employment Area

Table 4.1 - *District Specific Policy*

Subarea	Area Description	Exceptional or Additional Policy	Reference in the DGP
MN1	Mill Woods Major Node (includes Mill Woods Station ARP)	MN-1 For further planning direction refer to the Mill Woods Station Area Redevelopment Plan.	1.2 Authority and relationship to other plans
R4	Meadows (Larkspur, Silver Berry, Wild Rose neighbourhoods)	R4-1 Wild Rose park is designated to accommodate a public elementary school. See Figure 4.2	2.2.1 General policies
		R4-2 The Meadows District Park is designated as a District Park/High School Campus and can accommodate both public and separate senior high schools. See Figure 4.3	2.2.1 General policies
		R4-3 Silver Berry Park is designated to accommodate a public elementary school, a separate elementary/junior high school and a community league facility. See Figure 4.3	2.2.1 General policies
RP1A	Maple NSP (portion of The Meadows ASP)	RP1A-1 For further planning direction refer to the Maple Neighbourhood Structure Plan.	1.2 Authority and relationship to other plans
RP1B	Tamarack NSP (portion of The Meadows ASP)	RP1B-1 For further planning direction refer to the Tamarack Neighbourhood Structure Plan.	1.2 Authority and relationship to other plans
RP1C	Aster NSP (portion of The Meadows ASP)	RP1C-1 For further planning direction refer to theAster Neighbourhood Structure Plan.	1.2 Authority and relationship to other plans
RP1D	Laurel NSP (portion of The Meadows ASP)	RP1D-1 For further planning direction refer to the Laurel Neighbourhood Structure Plan.	1.2 Authority and relationship to other plans
RV1	North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System - portion	RV1-1 Refer to the North Saskatchewan River Valley ARP and Ribbon of Green Strategic Plan for additional planning direction and strategic context.	1.2 Authority and relationship to other plans
All other subareas		Where no exceptions are noted, then District Plan General Policy and District Plan Figures 6.1-6.9 shall guide planning decisions.	

In Table 4.1, you can also find information about:
  + Subareas that have another area plan to consider in addition to your district plan and the District General Policy

+ Other policy documents to consider like land use studies
+ Policies that may overrule the District General Policy
+ Reminders to also look at the District General Policy sections

Step 5: Determine what type of development is possible considering all the policies together
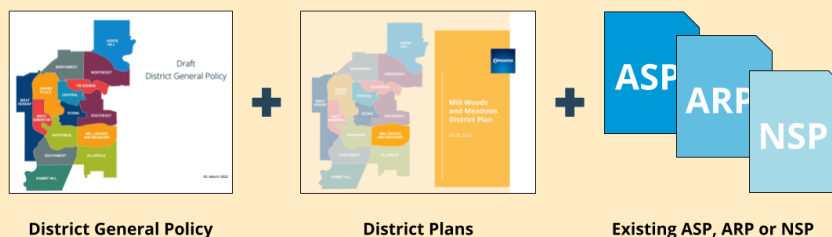
Now that you have reviewed all the maps and policies, you will know what development is possible on your spot. If you're a developer this will help inform your rezoning application or development permit; if you are resident it will help inform you about how that property in your neighbourhood or along a corridor may develop.

If there is another area plan applicable to your spot, make sure to read the direction in that plan. Consider both the policies in the District General Policy and the policies in the area plan for complete direction. Remember, if the area plan is older than the district plan, then the area plan overrules the district plan and District General Policy if there is a contradiction or conflict between them.

For example, your spot has both an area plan, district plan and District General Policy that you need to review. If the area plan limits height to mid rise when the district plan and District General Policy calls for high rise, then the area plan overrules and development cannot be taller than mid rise.

You need to consider all of the policy directions together.

If there is another area plan in effect this means you need to consider:

District General Policy   **District Plans**   **Existing ASP, ARP or NSP**

If you do not have another area in effect, this means you only need to consider:

District General Policy   **District Plans**

Edmonton's Future Planning System

District Planning is just one step in making Edmonton's planning system easier to navigate and engage with. Once existing area plans complete their purpose, they will be retired, meaning, the district plans and District General Policy will be the key documents you need to reference below The City Plan. This will create a simplified, streamlined and more predictable planning system for developers, builders and residents.

Get Involved

Check out the other Conversation Starters to learn more about:

+ 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 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.