



Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative

Edmonton

Frequently Asked Questions

edmonton.ca/zoningbylawrenewal

1. What is zoning and how does the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative impact me?

Zoning is everywhere — from our parks and playgrounds, to garden suites and the downtown core. Zoning guides our city's growth in an orderly way to minimize conflicts between different activities and can improve the safety, public health and welfare of its citizens and the environment.

The Zoning Bylaw is the “rulebook” for all development in Edmonton. It provides direction on applicable rules and regulations you'll need to consider when constructing a building, starting a business or undertaking renovations or redevelopment. The Zoning Bylaw sets the rules for where new buildings should go, what types of buildings they can be and what types of businesses and activities can happen on a property. The purpose of zoning is to determine what can be built where.

The Zoning Bylaw does not provide the rules for how a building is constructed, in terms of safety and construction materials — that is the role of the [Alberta Building Code](#). Nor does it determine the rules for business licensing — that is the role of the [Business License Bylaw](#). The City of Edmonton has a number of other bylaws aimed at ensuring the health, safety and wellness of Edmontonians, such as the [Community Standards Bylaw](#).

2. Why renew Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw? What are the benefits?

To support Edmonton's growth, change and competitiveness as a major Canadian city, the City's policies and regulatory tools need to evolve and align with Edmonton's long term city-building needs.

The current Zoning Bylaw is overly complex, has strict zoning rules, cumbersome regulations and requires work-arounds that prevent excellence in public service delivery. It has been 20 years since the Zoning Bylaw has been renewed and almost 60 years since it has gone through an extensive overhaul.

Renewing the Zoning Bylaw offers an opportunity to:

- + Align zoning regulations with **The City Plan's** long-term city-building goals, such as supporting compact, mixed-used and sustainable development – where housing, businesses, recreation and employment centres are all within easy access by residents;
- + Striving towards a more streamlined and simplified regulatory and planning landscape; one that will enable and steward social and economic investments and growth throughout our city; and to
- + Seek to address housing choice and diversity, social inequities, and the separation of land uses that has resulted in the segregation of people, production and places.

3. HOW DOES THE ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE SUPPORT THE CITY PLAN?

Zoning is one of the main tools used to implement **The City Plan**. The Zoning Bylaw Renewal aligns and delivers on The City Plan's Six Guiding Values, which describe how Edmontonians want to experience their city. The new Zoning Bylaw will:

- + Enable compact, walkable, mixed-use development that supports equitable access to employment, education and amenities;
- + Support the growth and resilience of a diverse economy so all Edmontonians have the opportunity to thrive;
- + Allow more adaptable development to give Edmontonians the opportunity to create;
- + Allow for diverse housing options that contribute to greater housing choices and affordability for Edmontonians to live in all neighbourhoods;
- + Support greater climate resilience and energy efficiency;
- + Foster inclusive and welcoming urban spaces and public places so all Edmontonians can belong; and
- + Help mitigate land use impacts to preserve Edmonton's environment and maintain a high standard of living.

4. HOW IS THE ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE CONNECTED TO OTHER CITY PLANNING PROJECTS LIKE DISTRICT PLANNING OR THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK?

Implementing **The City Plan** will lead to a more integrated policy and regulatory ecosystem.

District Planning translates The City Plan's city-wide policies into 15 districts across the city. Each district plan will consider the area's geography, mobility and current land use policies, and apply The City Plan's policies accordingly. In doing so, district plans set the policy context for the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative's regulatory changes.

The Growth Management Framework will support financially efficient and compact city building in priority growth areas using a variety of tools, including policy, incentives, infrastructure investments and partnerships.

By ensuring alignment between all three projects, we will support greater clarity and predictability for developers and applicants when making development decisions.

5. HOW DOES THE ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE SUPPORT EDMONTON'S BUSINESSES AND LOCAL ECONOMY?

The new Zoning Bylaw will create a modernized regulatory environment that focuses on simplifying and streamlining requirements. This renewed focus will support more efficient service delivery and remove unnecessary barriers for those who want to invest in Edmonton. This initiative is in pursuit of the following outcomes:

- + Standard zones are broad and adaptable enough to satisfy the rapidly evolving needs of the market, and will accommodate a greater range of development outcomes. This will reduce the number of rezonings required and past reliance on Direct Control and Special Area zones. In turn, time and cost savings will be generated with regulatory risk being reduced through increased certainty
- + Broader-use categories will allow for a greater range of activities to occur in a building or space and accommodate new and emerging business models and trends
- + Requirement for Change of Use development permit applications will be reduced where no major exterior alterations or additions are proposed for existing facilities
- + Moving towards more permitted as-of-right uses will enable greater certainty for applicants and communities by knowing what is allowed in a zone and under what conditions
- + Customer service is improved by creating a more transparent and efficient permitting process
- + The online user experience for planning and development services will be enhanced through new online tools and technology to manage and maintain the new Zoning Bylaw

6. WHY IS EQUITY A CONSIDERATION FOR THE NEW ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL?

Land use regulations are developed based on land use considerations and land use impacts. Equity is a lens that can help determine impacts that land use regulations can have on outcomes like diversity of housing choice, access to transportation and accessibility.

7. HOW WILL EQUITY STRENGTHEN THE ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE?

Administration and City Council have successfully advanced equity measures in the past through Zoning Bylaw amendments like removing single-detached-only zoning, removing parking minimums and allowing supportive housing across the city. Zoning changes like these demonstrate the importance of diverse housing to welcome a diverse demographic of people.

With the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative, Edmonton has an opportunity to update its land use regulations to better reflect the city's current size, future direction, and diversity. To learn more about the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative's Gender Based Analysis+ and equity approach, visit [Equity and the Zoning Bylaw](#).

8. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIG CHANGES BEING PROPOSED THROUGH THE ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL?

The Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative requires rethinking how and what we regulate. Some of the big changes that are being proposed include:

- + Applying an equity lens when drafting the regulations to create a Zoning Bylaw for all Edmontonians
- + Consolidating the number of zones from 46 to 23 to create fewer, more enabling and inclusive standard zones and reducing reliance on Direct Control Zones and Special Areas
- + Introduction of Mixed Use Zones that enable a diversity of uses in Edmonton's nodes and corridors
- + Reducing the number of uses from 127 to 51 to reduce redundancy of similar uses with similar land use impacts
- + Reducing reliance on discretionary uses to situations where they are critically required and enabling a greater range of permitted uses with specific additional regulations for uses that may have a greater impact on surrounding properties
- + Compressing the various residential building types and implementing a single Residential Use class to enable a greater selection of housing options while maintaining control over size and locations of buildings to ensure they are contextually appropriate
- + Developing purposeful and enforceable regulations that are clear and easy to understand through the use of plain language, diagrams, and illustrations

9. HOW ARE DECISIONS BEING MADE ABOUT WHAT TO REGULATE, AND WHY?

As Edmonton grows, so must its ability to accommodate the building and development needs of its future residents. The City Plan provides the desired outcomes in which this should be done, and the policies in the plan inform what zoning regulations are needed.

The new Zoning Bylaw will challenge the City's conventional way of regulating land use to enable a better life for all Edmontonians. Achieving The City Plan goals and ensuring land use impacts are mitigated through zoning will require making some trade-offs. Allowing some regulatory flexibility means easing control over some things while accepting a degree of risk.

For the writing of the new Zoning Bylaw, a number of tools and frameworks have been developed including a Gender Based Analysis+ and Equity Toolkit, a variety of communication tools and a decision-informing tool that provides guidance on zoning while balancing: legal requirements, health and safety, policy alignment, land-use impact, economic impact, equity, reasonability, service outcomes and stakeholder feedback.

10. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF REDUCING THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL ZONES?

Edmonton currently has 16 standard residential zones, creating overlap and potentially redundant rules. Some zones regulate similar uses, creating inconsistencies in how the same type of home may be regulated in two different areas of the city. The proposed approach of allowing at least five zones that permit residential land uses will create clearer distinctions between zones and the scales of housing that will be regulated.

11. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF REDUCING THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL LAND USES?

Edmonton currently has 12 specific residential land uses, creating unnecessary complexity. Separating residential uses opens the door for the exclusion of residential activities from certain areas. The proposed approach of creating one general residential land use will create opportunities for innovation and diverse housing forms, support clarity and ease-of-use. Residential zones will continue to regulate residential intensity and ensure compatibility of scale.

12. HOW WILL THE MATURE NEIGHBOURHOOD OVERLAY BE DEALT WITH IN THE NEW ZONING BYLAW?

The Mature Neighbourhood Overlay (MNO) was comprehensively overhauled in 2017 to help foster redevelopment in the Edmonton's mature neighbourhoods, while also ensuring new development responds to existing development contexts.

The new Zoning Bylaw proposes to retire the MNO and incorporate certain regulations into the new residential zones. This includes the removal or updating of specific regulations that are ineffective, restrict development or add complexity and do not align with the goals of the new Zoning Bylaw and policy directions of The City Plan. Rather than focusing specific development regulations on a limited geographical area of the city under the MNO, this approach will ensure new development remains sensitive to existing development *city-wide* where new residential zones are applied.

To learn more about which regulations from the MNO have been retired versus incorporated into the new bylaw, check out the [Rationale for Retiring the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay \(MNO\)](#).

13. WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH DIRECT CONTROL ZONES?

Direct Control Zones (DC1 and DC2 Zones) contain regulations tailored to meet the unique development objectives of a specific site or area. They are commonly used to enable development that cannot be accommodated by a standard zone. Direct Control Zones can be used to integrate development with surrounding properties, protect areas of historical interest, and ensure additional community consultation. The Zoning Bylaw contains over 1,000 individual Direct Control Zones.

Direct Control Zones will continue to be an available tool to control the use, development and siting of buildings for specific sites in the new Zoning Bylaw. A new simplified Direct Control Zone is proposed to replace the current DC1 and DC2 zones. The new Direct Control Zone would also be the tool used for the designation of heritage buildings. Having one Direct Control Zone will reduce confusion over which zone to use and help ensure that the zoning tool is used as intended.

Existing Direct Control Zones will not be rezoned as part of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative's City Wide Rezoning.

14. WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH SPECIAL AREAS?

Special Area Zones are unique zones that are only applied in specific areas to regulate the Use, design and extent of development in order to achieve local planning objectives that cannot be achieved through a standard zone.

As part of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative, Administration is analyzing the Special Areas and their associated Special Area Zones. The goal of the Special Areas analysis is to retire Special Areas that are no longer required while keeping those that are still required to achieve unique city building outcomes. To learn more and provide your feedback, check out our [Approach to Special Areas](#).

15. WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH PARKING?

Outcomes established through the **Open Option Parking** bylaw amendments adopted by Council in 2020 are proposed to be maintained; homeowners and businesses will continue to be able to choose how much parking they provide on their properties.

Parking maximums are proposed to be maintained. Currently, the Main Streets Overlay boundary is used as the area of application for certain parking maximum requirements. With the proposed retirement of the Main Streets Overlay, a new boundary is proposed that aligns with the draft Commercial Frontage areas that are proposed to be included in the [new District Plans](#). The draft Commercial Frontage policies proposed in the [draft District General Policy](#) require commercial uses at street level that are oriented towards the street to support an active pedestrian frontage and discourage vehicle-oriented site design.

The current approach to calculating required barrier free parking spaces is proposed to be maintained. These regulations have been updated to align with the proposed new use definitions.

The parking-related use definition, Vehicle Parking, is proposed to be replaced with two new Uses, Parking Facility and Standalone Parking Facility. This proposed change simplifies the regulatory framework and increases certainty around where a Standalone Parking Facility may be developed.

16. WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH NOTIFICATIONS?

The draft Zoning Bylaw presents an opportunity to modernize the way in which Edmontonians and property owners are informed about proposed development and identify appropriate opportunities to provide input. It also looks to reduce unnecessary regulatory processes, streamline services and ensure a more equitable notification system for the new bylaw. The proposed changes include:

- + Approved development permits to be published on a publicly accessible web page
- + Retiring the requirement for the City to mail permitted development (Class A) letters
- + Removing the requirement in certain overlays to send notice before a discretionary development (Class B) decision can be made
- + When a discretionary development (Class B) is approved, in addition to letters being sent to property owners, letters will now also be sent to the municipal addresses to ensure those that do not own land are informed
- + Rezoning application notifications will now also be mailed to the municipal addresses 60 m around the site to ensure those that do not own land are informed
- + Development permit notification signs are now required in more areas of the city and expanded for certain types of non-residential development

17. WHY IS THE CITY OF EDMONTON SO FOCUSED ON SERVICE AND HELPING INDUSTRY?

Improving services is a key element that supports Edmonton's growth, competitiveness as a major Canadian city and long-term city-building needs. The City's role in city-building is to ensure that what gets built in Edmonton meets necessary standards and guidelines, such as the pipes in the ground having the right capacity or that there are enough parks for a community. It is the role of business, developers and Edmontonians to invest in building the buildings, opening businesses, enhancing and maintaining their properties, etc. To support this, the City is working to make it as easy as possible to continue to build our vibrant city and support the economy.

In addition, industry stakeholders are the most frequent 'users' of the Zoning Bylaw and are well-suited to provide technical feedback on whether the proposed regulations are practical, implementable and reflective of present-day building practices and market conditions. In other words, working with industry stakeholders helps to 'stress test' ideas and ensure the rules the City puts in place will realistically be able to support their intended outcomes.

18. HOW DO ZONING CHANGES, AS PART OF THE ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE, IMPACT PROPERTY TAXES?

A significant number of factors are considered when a property is assessed for taxation purposes. Zoning may be one of these factors. Although it is difficult to determine with any certainty if and to what extent the new zones may impact your tax assessment, in most circumstances, the City does not anticipate the new Zoning Bylaw to have a significant impact on your tax assessment and taxes.

19. WHERE CAN I FIND OUT WHAT MY NEW ZONE IS GOING TO BE?

You can use the **"Know Your Zone" Rezoning Map** to find out proposed zoning information, including which of the new proposed zones will apply to your property.

Current zoning information can be found on maps.edmonton.ca.

20. WHAT TECHNOLOGY BEING UPDATED TO SUPPORT THE ZONING BYLAW, AND WHY NOW?

Outdated technology has contributed to redundant workflows, time wasted searching for information or in some cases unable to understand what the requirements are which act as a barrier to development and takes staff time away from providing excellent customer service and the review process. Advancements in technology have provided an opportunity to evaluate new ways to access information and streamline processes.

The technology changes include new modern platforms to access the Zoning Bylaw and Rezoning Map, replacing robohelp and the zoning map platforms. In addition to this Administration is exploring options to automate simple, low risk applications so that staff can spend time on complex applications and providing excellent customer service to occasional users.

21. HOW WILL ENGAGEMENT INFLUENCE OR SHAPE THE NEW ZONING BYLAW?

Public and stakeholder input will shape every step and aspect of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative. There have been a wide range of ways for community members to engage since 2019, including public presentations, workshops and open houses, as well as interactive online engagement and feedback opportunities. The Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative team is committed to reviewing public feedback and incorporating the perspectives and opinions of all who engage in the decision-making process.

22. HOW DO I GET INVOLVED AND SHARE MY FEEDBACK?

From September to December 2022, a draft of the new Zoning Bylaw and the “Know Your Zone” Rezoning Map will be available on [Engaged Edmonton](#) for Edmontonians to review and provide feedback. There are a number of ways to provide your feedback:

- + **Overview of the New Zoning Bylaw:** Read and share comments on the summary of the new proposed zones and key sections for highlights.
- + **Draft Zoning Bylaw:** Take your time to read the entire bylaw or quickly reference areas of interest by using the interactive table of contents. Share your comments throughout the draft bylaw using the guided feedback tool.
 - And, check out the **new forever home of the Zoning Bylaw**, where a sample of draft content has been included to gather feedback on the platform’s usability and how it can be improved.
- + **“Know Your Zone” Rezoning Map:** Get familiar with the zones that apply to you by typing in the address of your residence, business, or favourite coffee shop. Confirm the new proposed zone it’s in and circle back to the draft Zoning Bylaw to understand how the new zone and regulations will apply to each area.

We recognize the bylaw and project itself are technical. Here are some tools we've developed to help break down common zoning-related terms and concepts you may come across as you dive into the bylaw:

- + [Zoning Bylaw Renewal Website](#)
- + [The City Plan](#) and [Zoning Bylaw](#) Videos
- + [Making Space Podcast](#)

23. HOW WILL I KNOW THAT MY FEEDBACK HAS BEEN CONSIDERED?

Engagement activities will be summarized as part of What We Heard reports, which will be added to the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative webpage. In these reports, the diverse perspectives of residents, business and industry, community organizations and public institutions will be highlighted.

24. WHEN WILL THE ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE BE COMPLETE?

There are still many milestones in the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative and opportunities for Edmontonians to provide their feedback.

Administration will present the first draft of the Zoning Bylaw to Urban Planning Committee in November of 2022. Following this phase of engagement, Administration will prepare a What We Heard Report and begin refining the draft Zoning Bylaw using feedback gathered during engagement.

A final draft of the Zoning Bylaw will be presented to City Council in Fall of 2023. At this time a Public Hearing will be held. If approved, the new Zoning Bylaw is intended to come into effect as of January 1, 2023.

Edmontonians are invited to [register](#) and participate in Urban Planning Committee meetings and Public Hearings. Visit [Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative Projects and Timeline](#) for a detailed schedule.

25. HOW DO I STAY INFORMED ON THE ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE?

To stay in-the-know with the progress of the new Zoning Bylaw and zoning map, sign up for our [monthly newsletter](#) and check out [Engaged Edmonton](#).

26. WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR FEEDBACK?

We invite your questions via email to zoningbylawrenewal@edmonton.ca. The Zoning Bylaw Renewal team checks the mailbox regularly and aims to send responses within 2 to 3 business days.