

# ZONING BYLAW RENEWAL INITIATIVE

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEW ZONING BYLAW

Edmonton

July 2020 | [edmonton.ca/ZoningBylawRenewal](https://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 of the Discussion Papers](#) 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



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
About this Document	5
What is Zoning and the Zoning Bylaw?	6
Why Renew the Zoning Bylaw?	7
Enabling People, Places and Businesses to Thrive and Prosper	11
A Strategic, Simplified and Streamlined Zoning Bylaw	13
Deciding on When and How We Regulate	16
Conclusion and Next Steps	18
Get Involved!	19

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 1. Alignment with Strategic Policies	8
Fig 2. New Layout and Interface	13
Fig 3. Fewer, More Enabling and Inclusive Zones	14
Fig 4. Combine Uses	15

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. New Zoning Bylaw Decision Making Framework	17
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## INTRODUCTION

Edmonton is many things, but first and foremost it is **a gathering of people**. The city's built form is a physical collection of our shared history and provides the backdrop for our social interactions, influencing the way we engage and understand each other. The interplay between our social and physical structures continually grows and changes **in response to global changes and to meet the needs of people who live here – their hopes and aspirations, their priorities and decisions**.

The Draft City Plan and ConnectEdmonton describe our values and the **purposeful** decisions we must make to ensure we become a healthy, urban, climate resilient city of two million that supports a prosperous region. With the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative, we're taking those transformative city building ideas and asking how our built form can help us live out the values of ConnectEdmonton and the Draft City Plan in an **equitable** way. This equity lens is a shift from previous ways of thinking about land use regulations. It impels us to consider the unintended social impacts of our regulations and take thoughtful and decisive action to create Everyone's Edmonton.

The Big City Moves are an invitation to work together. They define bold, transformative priorities and create a set of opportunities for all who call Edmonton home. With the Zoning Bylaw Renewal, we are able to examine how each Move can be realized through zoning, and how those shifts will create an Edmonton for everyone.

- + How can the Zoning Bylaw support **Catalyzing and Converging**, resulting in a creative, innovative and collaborative city for all people and businesses to prosper?
- + How will zoning support **Greener as We Grow**, so that new development contributes to the protection and enhancement of Edmonton's natural systems for present and future generations?

- + What do **Inclusive and Compassionate** zoning regulations look like and how can we create options for a more equitable future?
- + How can zoning promote a **Community of Communities**, so all Edmontonians have access to the goods and services they need regardless of their neighbourhood?
- + What outcomes will we need to prioritize in the Zoning Bylaw to ensure Edmonton is a **Rebuildable City**, capable of adapting to change and disruptions while ensuring all Edmontonians have access to new opportunities?

Edmonton is at a unique crossroads. We have an opportunity to collectively **reimagine** how we want to experience our city and how our city's infrastructure can help enhance our relationships with each other. While the Big City Moves help shape the structure of our city, the direction comes from Edmontonians. Transforming our city is a collective project that supports many voices, interests and ideas coming together to make things happen. **We welcome city builders to participate in the timely and essential process of renewing Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw** to enhance our City's competitive advantage and welcome one million more residents. The proactive decisions we make now will lay the groundwork for generations to come and help create a more equitable, open and caring city for all.

Let's get started.



# ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The **Philosophy of the New Zoning Bylaw** is intended to outline why Edmonton needs a new Zoning Bylaw and what outcomes it will support. It provides an overview of the guiding principles and approaches that will shape the new Zoning Bylaw, ensuring that future choices and decisions are strategically consistent.

This paper seeks to explore the following questions:

- 1 What is Zoning and the Zoning Bylaw?
- 2 Why renew the Zoning Bylaw?
- 3 What are we going to do?
- 4 How are we going to do it?
- 5 How do we decide on when and how we regulate?



The Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative will develop a strategic, simplified and streamlined Zoning Bylaw to enable people, places and businesses to thrive and prosper.

# WHAT IS ZONING AND THE ZONING BYLAW?

Zoning is everywhere – from our parks and playgrounds, to garden suites and the downtown core. The purpose of zoning is to determine **what** can be built **where**. It 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. **Zoning guides 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.**

Zoning is also the main tool used to implement municipal development plans. A municipal development plan provides residents and businesses information on how the municipality will address the current and future needs of the community, including land use, transportation systems, municipal services and environmental considerations. In Edmonton, The Draft City Plan, a combined municipal development plan and transportation plan, sets the strategic direction for the way the city plans to grow to a population of two million people.

Rules for buildings and uses on private property in Edmonton combine to create the Zoning Bylaw. [Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw 12800](#) has been in

effect since 2001; this important legal document has the power to shape the physical form, and how we live in and engage with our city.

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 licencing – that is the role of the Business Licence 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. Ensuring the right tools are used to achieve a particular outcome will be an important consideration for the new Zoning Bylaw.

The Zoning Bylaw is the instruction manual on how to build and use land in our city. To learn more about Zoning in Edmonton – read [What is Zoning?](#)

## **History of Zoning in Edmonton**

To learn how our Zoning Bylaw has changed since its introduction in 1933 – read the [History of Zoning in Edmonton](#)

## **Legislated Requirement**

The Municipal Government Act requires a Land Use Bylaw (aka Zoning Bylaw) for every municipality in Alberta. The bylaw must divide the municipality into land use districts (zones), regulate the use of land or buildings, and provide a process for making decisions on development permit applications.

# WHY RENEW THE ZONING BYLAW?

For the first time in almost 20 years, Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw will go through a **comprehensive overhaul that involves rethinking how, what and why the City regulates in terms of zoning and land development.**

The following City directions outline why the Zoning Bylaw needs to be renewed and the opportunities in renewing now.

## Evolving Strategic Policy and Directions

Since 2017, the City of Edmonton has made a concerted effort to update its policy framework to create a vision and direction for Edmonton's future. This vision is articulated in [ConnectEdmonton, Edmonton's Strategic Plan \(2019–2028\)](#).

ConnectEdmonton is the centrepiece, aspiration and inspiration of our city – it sets the direction for our future and outlines where we need to change today to realize our vision for Edmonton in 2050.

The Draft City Plan translates the vision and strategic goals of ConnectEdmonton into a comprehensive public policy document and a physical growth strategy for Edmonton's future. It articulates the choices we need to make to become a healthy, urban and climate resilient city of two million people that supports a prosperous region. The Draft City Plan provides direction on how Edmonton will need to grow to achieve a more compact, efficient and livable city. In order to achieve the outcomes of The Draft City Plan, the City's planning tools, including the Zoning Bylaw, need to be consistent with and support The Draft City Plan.

The current Zoning Bylaw (12800) has not been substantially updated in a comprehensive way since 2001. In 2001, this was largely a consolidation exercise designed to harmonize five different land use bylaws, carried over from the city's annexation in 1982. The last significant overhaul of the Zoning Bylaw was completed in 1961. Now, 60 years later, many development regulations that were designed for a small prairie city in the 60s are still shaping the built form of Canada's fifth largest city in 2020.

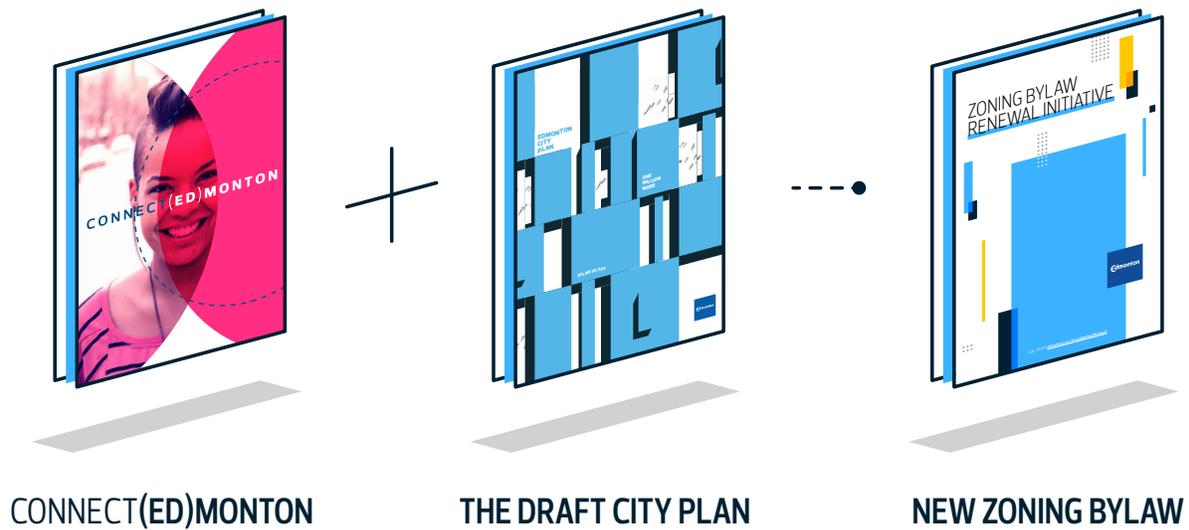
Edmonton has transformed into a big city and has a key leadership role to play in provincial, national and international contexts. The Edmonton of today requires an updated set of land use regulations that better reflects its current size and future direction. As a result of the recent evolution of the City's vision, goals, and long-range plan, the Zoning Bylaw is further misaligned with the Edmonton envisioned in those strategic policies. The current Zoning Bylaw:

- + **Does not align with long term city-building goals** – it does not support compact, mixed-used and sustainable development, or a Community of Communities linked by a network of Nodes and Corridors, as outlined in The Draft City Plan.
- + **Does not foster vibrant and inclusive communities** – the inflexible nature of the bylaw keeps activities separated from each other, preventing the creation of collaborative and connected communities where housing, businesses, recreation and employment centres are all within easy access by residents.
- + **Acts as a barrier to economic development** – its growing complexity, and outdated zones, uses and regulations lack the adaptability necessary to accommodate new and emerging business models and building trends. The bylaw places administrative burden on businesses opening and growing in Edmonton.
- + **Includes systemic discrimination** – under the guise of protectionism, the bylaw has been used as an exclusionary tool to control certain segments of the population or business types.

Renewing Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw is a long overdue process and a rare opportunity to align our regulations with our long-range planning policies. Aligning the planning framework from the top down allows Edmontonians to follow a clear path from the aspirational language of policy through to the concrete changes that emerge in our neighbourhoods. It allows Administration and

Council to make more consistent and informed decisions on development proposals that will deliver on the vision of ConnectEdmonton and The Draft City Plan. It also provides tools to enable Edmonton's city-builders and entrepreneurs to create the businesses, housing and amenities that bring life to our city.

Fig 1. Alignment with Strategic Policies



## The Draft City Plan Six Guiding Values

The Draft City Plan has 6 Guiding Values that articulate how Edmontonians want to experience their future city.

- + I want to BELONG and contribute
- + I want to LIVE in a place that feels like home
- + I want opportunities to THRIVE
- + I want more ACCESS within my city
- + I want to PRESERVE what matters most
- + I want to be able to CREATE and innovate

These Guiding Values will inform the approach to the new Zoning Bylaw.

## Delivering Excellent Services to Our Community

City building is a shared endeavour; achieving Edmonton’s vision and goals is undertaken by everyone who lives and does business in this city. The Zoning Bylaw is often the first exposure many Edmontonians have with the City’s planning and development services.

The City of Edmonton has a significant role to play in city building, including the delivery of land development services to Edmontonians. This includes the following services in relation to the Zoning Bylaw:

- + Issuing development permits, and conducting compliance activities and inspections
- + Processing land development applications for new neighbourhood plans, rezonings and subdivisions
- + Continuous improvement activities to enhance the experience of citizens and customers of planning and development services and operational efficiency of permit and inspection services

The delivery of excellent service is one of the key objectives of Edmonton’s Corporate Business Plan (2019–2022). This plan outlines and prioritizes the City actions needed to achieve ConnectEdmonton’s goals. The Corporate Business Plan identifies renewing Edmonton’s Zoning Bylaw as an opportunity to transform the way we deliver land development services to Edmontonians.

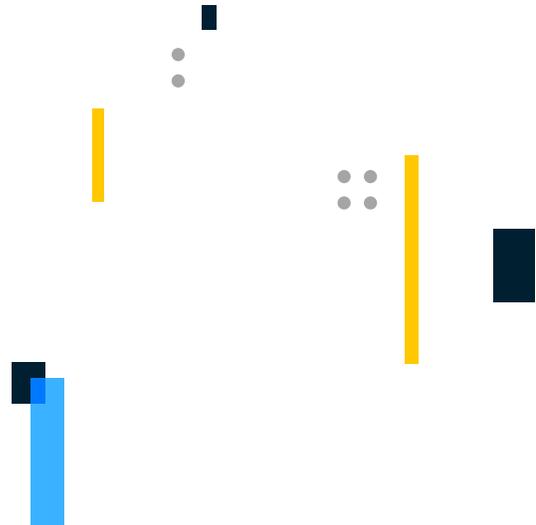
Through a series of public and stakeholder workshops, surveys, drop-in sessions and meetings in 2018 and 2019, the Zoning Bylaw team collected information on a wide range of topics, including user experiences with the bylaw. The following provides a summary of the issues identified with the current Zoning Bylaw from a service delivery perspective:

- + **Overly complex bylaw** – at over 800 pages in length it is difficult to navigate, hard to find and interpret the correct information, and is not accessible to all Edmontonians.
- + **Strict zoning rules and cumbersome regulations** – the high level of control and lack of clear intent of regulations is costly, frustrating and time consuming for all bylaw users.

- + **Outdated regulations** – provides barriers to innovative or sustainable designs, are unable to accommodate current or future market trends, and does not reflect the diversity of the City as it is today.
- + **Workarounds to overcome the failings of the Zoning Bylaw** – the past decade has seen a surge in amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and Direct Control zones, and a steady increase in appeals at the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board. These processes are costly for applicants and the City, and are a response to the misalignment of the bylaw with the types of development residents want to see in their city.

The quality of the Zoning Bylaw has a direct impact on the efficiency of our development permitting and inspection services. Unclear and outdated regulations slow down review and inspection times, create uncertainty and inconsistency in decision making, and lead to delays in the development process. This inefficient regulatory system impedes land development and business opportunities, adds time and cost to the development process, strains government resources and provides barriers to the built environment Edmontonians want.

The new Zoning Bylaw will create a modern regulatory environment that focuses on simplifying and streamlining requirements to support efficient service delivery. This renewed focus will allow the new Zoning Bylaw to serve the needs of all Edmontonians by removing unnecessary barriers for residents, businesses and developers that want to invest in our community.





## City of Edmonton Land Development Services By the Numbers (2019)

### Applications received:

**1,395**

Major development permits

**66** average calendar days to issue

**4,154**

Minor development permits

**24** average calendar days to issue

**7,774**

Home improvement permits

**21** average calendar days to issue

**335**

Subdivision applications

**120** average calendar days to conditionally approve complex, non-complex & change requests

**41** average calendar days to conditionally approve lot splits

**212**

Rezoning applications

**161** average calendar days to approve rezonings

**240** average calendar days to approve combined rezoning and plan amendment

### Inspections Conducted:

**2,135**

Development Compliance

**1,614**

Landscaping

**1,024**

Development Permit Inspections

# ENABLING PEOPLE, PLACES AND BUSINESSES TO THRIVE AND PROSPER

There is a big opportunity here – **an opportunity to rethink how land and development is regulated in Edmonton and to collectively question whether we are regulating the right things.** Looking to the future, the new Zoning Bylaw needs to reimagine Edmonton’s regulatory framework to better serve the needs and aspirations of the community, and enable Edmontonians to thrive and prosper.

Supporting greater flexibility, adaptability and service excellence will require a **different approach to regulation, and a willingness to let go of prescriptive control over specific and detailed development outcomes.**

## **What are we going to do?**

The **New Zoning Bylaw** will:

- 1 Align with strategic policies and directions
- 2 Provide regulations that support better development outcomes
- 3 Be user-friendly for all audiences, with clear, purposeful and enforceable regulations
- 4 Be efficient and effective in its regulations and is adaptable over time

## **The Draft City Plan Policy Directions**

Develop regulations and processes that are efficient, streamlined and easily understood in order to enhance Edmonton’s competitiveness for investors and entrepreneurs (3.1.3.5)

Adapt the planning and regulatory environment to support innovative business models and operations (3.2.1.1)

## Align with Strategic Policies and Directions

The new Zoning Bylaw will provide the regulatory tools to advance City policy and directions. To demonstrate the ways that the new Zoning Bylaw will translate policy into regulation, the Discussion Papers provide an explicit link to relevant City policies. Discussion Papers can be found on the [Engaged Edmonton platform](#).

## Support Better Development Outcomes

The zones, uses and regulations of the new Zoning Bylaw will strive for simplicity and flexibility. This will allow for greater innovation and resilience to changes in market conditions, and will ultimately accommodate a wider range of development. Using form- and performance-based approaches will support good urban design by providing flexibility for creativity and innovation, while mitigating land use impacts. This will help ensure that the new Zoning Bylaw follows The Draft City Plan's Six Guiding Values for 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 choice 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**.
- + Help mitigate land use impacts to **preserve** Edmonton's environment and maintain a high standard of living.

## User-Friendly for Everyone

Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw is used by many people for many reasons. Residents, consultants, architects, builders, lawyers, and City of Edmonton staff all interact with the Zoning Bylaw for different purposes and have different familiarity with the regulations. The new Zoning Bylaw must serve all Edmontonians; as such, the new Zoning Bylaw will be more accessible and understandable for everyone, and with purposeful and clear regulations. The text of the bylaw will be easier to understand through the use of plain language where possible.

## Efficient, Effective and Adaptable

The new Zoning Bylaw will focus on improving the user experience and supporting efficient service delivery. This means creating a regulatory environment where barriers to economic activity are minimized to help reduce time and cost to Edmontonians and businesses. Reducing regulatory barriers will help support a competitive economy by enabling streamlined business processes (e.g. self-service permitting and computer readability for simple permits). However, embracing regulatory efficiencies must be balanced against the need to address strategic policy, while ensuring health, safety and environmental stewardship for current and future Edmontonians.

Every regulation must be purposeful and clear in its intent. Deliberately re-evaluating what and why we regulate will help to rationalize each regulation and ultimately create a bylaw without unnecessary rules. Meaningful and effectively communicated regulations will improve the application, interpretation and enforcement of the new Zoning Bylaw. This will support greater efficiency and reduce costs and delays in permit review and compliance activities for Edmontonians and the development industry.

Cities change and evolve, and their regulatory needs change with them. The new Zoning Bylaw will be designed for greater adaptability to allow for new and emerging industries, development forms and market trends. An adaptable Zoning Bylaw can provide opportunities for businesses to innovate and to enable new forms of housing to meet the changing needs of Edmontonians. By recognizing change as a certainty, and planning for it instead of reacting to it, Edmonton will be better prepared to stay competitive and continue to serve its residents in the face of uncertainty and even major disruptions.

# A STRATEGIC, SIMPLIFIED AND STREAMLINED ZONING BYLAW

Administration has combined **feedback from Edmontonians from 2018 and 2019 with research into municipal best practices, jurisdictional scans, development trends, and direction from new and emerging City policy** to inform the approach to drafting a new Zoning Bylaw

## How are we going to do it?

The approach includes:

- + New Layout and Interface
- + Accessible Language
- + Hybrid Bylaw
- + Fewer, More Enabling and Inclusive Zones
- + Broader Uses
- + Purposeful and Enforceable Regulations
- + A Zoning Bylaw for Everyone

## New Layout and Interface

A new layout and interface will improve user experience to enhance understanding of regulations and their impacts. The new Zoning Bylaw will be more approachable in its structure and presentation. It will have a consistent layout, with a unified design language for all diagrams and illustrations to clearly communicate regulations and intended outcomes in a more visual way. Zones will be organized using tables, charts, diagrams, and section headings designed to help users navigate the bylaw. There will be more relevant information listed in each zone to reduce cross referencing between sections, and administrative content such as definitions will be moved to the back end of the bylaw.

A new web interface will improve the user experience by integrating a variety of functions to help applicants and residents better understand the regulations governing a specific property.

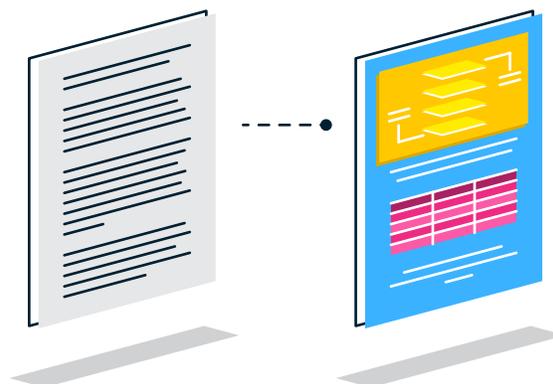
## Accessible Language

The regulations of the new Zoning Bylaw need to be understood by most people while ensuring that the rules can be legally enforced. This means using simpler language and commonly-understood terms where possible, while minimizing the use of jargon. It also means including images or plainly written explanatory notes to help the reader understand complex concepts.

## Hybrid Bylaw

The new Zoning Bylaw will follow a hybrid bylaw structure that would include Use-based zoning regulations and structure, while incorporating elements of Euclidean, performance-based and incentive-based zoning. This made-in-Edmonton approach will provide a variety of zoning tools, helping to ensure that the right tool can be used to achieve a particular outcome.

Fig 2. New Layout and Interface



## Zoning Approach

**Use-based**, also known as Euclidean zoning, focuses on regulating activities and uses (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial), typically keeping each use separated from the other. The Euclidean approach, which is the predominant system of the existing Zoning Bylaw, remains useful for the regulation of simple, straightforward development.

**Form-based zoning** focuses on the form and massing of buildings but provides more flexibility in the activities and uses that take place within the buildings. Form-based zoning is useful for supporting well-designed buildings and streetscapes, while providing adaptability for future changes.

**Performance-based zoning** focuses on outcomes rather than prescriptive regulations, often to manage off-site impacts (e.g. shadows, vibrations, noise). This provides applicants and designers the flexibility to achieve the requirements in a variety of different ways.

**Incentive-based zoning** provides a base level of development rights and adds the opportunity for bonuses to encourage certain outcomes or goals. An example would be to allow for increased density if a set number of affordable housing units are provided.

## Fewer, More Enabling and Inclusive Zones

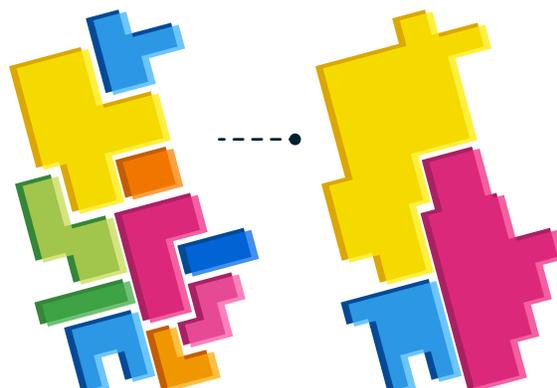
The current Zoning Bylaw is not always logical or consistent in its separation of zones. Many of the zones essentially do the same thing or contain a lot of overlap. For example, the bylaw has dozens of residential zones, often with little to no difference between them, but no true mixed use zones.

The new Zoning Bylaw will allow most standard zones to accommodate a range of built forms and uses. The standard zones will follow a clear progression to make sure there are distinct differences between each zone. Single-function zones will be reserved for the highest-risk uses that have the potential for greater land-use impacts, such as heavy industrial uses. The new bylaw will consolidate similar zones, accommodate a greater range of development outcomes, and ensure each zone aligns with Edmonton’s long-term city-building objectives. This will allow for flexibility in the types of buildings and the combination of uses based on the goal and purpose of the zone, and allow communities to adapt over time.

## Standard Zones

Standard or conventional zones are those zones that generally apply across large geographic areas with similar characteristics. Every property in Edmonton is assigned a zone.

Fig 3. Fewer, More Enabling and Inclusive Zones



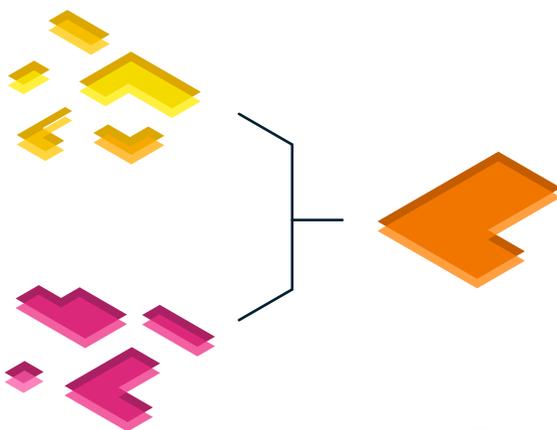
## Broader Uses

The Zoning Bylaw currently has 127 different land uses, including some that are for niche or antiquated activities. It also contains some uses aimed at regulating on moral grounds, or in some cases attempts to regulate users (people) instead of uses. These approaches are a part of the Zoning Bylaw's discriminatory history and are contrary to the spirit of belonging and inclusion that Edmontonians value.

Combining Uses will result in groups of broader use categories, similar to the General Retail Sales or General Industrial uses in the current Zoning Bylaw. This approach will allow for a greater range of activities to occur in a particular building or space, and will help future proof the new Zoning Bylaw through a more versatile, inclusive approach.

This change will require all bylaw users to get comfortable with a higher degree of flexibility and less prescriptive control. Uses must enable regulations to achieve the City's goals and policy outcomes, and not act as a blunt instrument to regulate residents' behaviours or isolated issues.

Fig 4. Combine Uses



## Purposeful and Enforceable Regulations

The new Zoning Bylaw will have fewer regulations and thus less control. Reducing regulatory complexity makes it easier to build and do business in Edmonton, and opens the door for innovative and sustainable designs. As a result, there will be less control of development and some regulations will be removed from the bylaw, regulated differently or effectively addressed through other means.

The intent of each regulation and the outcome it is meant to achieve will be clearly communicated. This will remove the guesswork from development regulations and help make development and enforcement processes more predictable.

## A Zoning Bylaw for Everyone

All Edmontonians should be able to participate in building the city envisioned in ConnectEdmonton and The Draft City Plan. Regulations will need to be written through the lenses such as inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation, age and gender. Administration will engage with subject matter experts and stakeholder groups throughout the development regulation writing process to ensure that the new Zoning Bylaw builds an Edmonton for everyone.

## DECIDING ON WHEN AND HOW WE REGULATE

There will be some difficult decisions to make in drafting the new Zoning Bylaw. **Deciding what to regulate through zoning is just as important as deciding what not to regulate.** There will be benefits, risks and tradeoffs with each decision to ensure the new Zoning Bylaw balances achieving policy outcomes with regulatory burden.

Assumptions about what should be regulated will be critically re-examined, and decisions will be informed by a **rigorous decision making framework.**

### Case Study: Open Option Parking

In June 2020 City Council approved an amendment to remove minimum parking requirements from the Zoning Bylaw. This change, known as Open Option Parking, represents a **philosophical shift** in how the City approaches regulation.

From 2018–2019 Administration undertook a Comprehensive Parking Review that looked at whether variation in parking demand could be explained by measurable factors that the City can regulate or control, like access to transit or population density. The analysis found that there was virtually no correlation between parking demand and these factors. In addition, a technical study found that there is an overall surplus of

on-site parking at all times of day and week in Edmonton. Together, this evidence suggests that minimum parking requirements had been ineffective at matching parking supply with demand. This resulted in an inefficient use of land and higher development costs that often served as a barrier to small business and a variety of housing forms.

This led to the conclusion that the Zoning Bylaw was not the right tool to regulate parking. Instead, with Open Option Parking, businesses and landowners are able to determine the amount of on-site parking they feel is needed for their particular operations, activities or lifestyle.

The Open Option Parking case study illustrates how, by fundamentally re-examining assumptions about what the Zoning Bylaw should regulate, the City was able to identify and eliminate a type of regulation that was not effectively supporting

long-term city-building objectives. The result is an approach that will better support choice and flexibility for Edmontonians, cost savings and efficiency for businesses, and ultimately a more compact, walkable, and vibrant Edmonton.

## How will it work?

Every decision making framework needs a solid foundation. While the inputs and considerations of the framework will certainly change over time, the two fundamental questions it seeks to answer will not change. These two questions may seem obvious, but are really important to ask:

1. **Should** the Zoning Bylaw regulate this?
2. If yes, then to **what degree** should it be regulated?

Answering these two questions will support sound and justifiable decision making. If the Zoning Bylaw should regulate something, the degree to which it is regulated will need to balance competing interests and consider trade-offs. [Table 1](#) below outlines the proposed method (principles) for decision making.

*Table 1. New Zoning Bylaw Decision Making Framework*

Should we regulate it?	If yes, then to what degree?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ <b>Legal obligation:</b> Do we have a legal requirement to regulate this topic?</li> <li>+ <b>Policy alignment:</b> Does regulating this topic align with The Draft City Plan and other strategic policies and directions on land use and development?</li> <li>+ <b>Scope is clearly definable:</b> Can the scope of the topic be clearly defined and understood?</li> <li>+ <b>Good planning practices/principles:</b> Is it best practice to pursue regulating this topic with available data and literature?</li> <li>+ <b>Stakeholder and Public input:</b> Do Edmontonians support regulating the topic?</li> <li>+ <b>Land use impact:</b> Will not regulating this topic create land use impacts, either locally or city-wide?</li> <li>+ <b>Measuring land use impact:</b> Is it possible to objectively measure the impact of the topic or will subjective measures be relied upon?</li> <li>+ <b>Weighing up the risks involved:</b> What are the risks and trade-offs of regulating/not regulating and how much risk should be taken on this topic?</li> <li>+ <b>Enforceability:</b> Can compliance with the regulation be easily determined, and can it be enforced?</li> <li>+ <b>Alternative means of regulation:</b> Is the Zoning Bylaw the only feasible way for this topic to be regulated, or are there alternative means such as other bylaws or standards that would be more appropriate?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ <b>Health &amp; Safety:</b> What level of regulation is required to protect the health and safety of Edmontonians and the environment?</li> <li>+ <b>Risks &amp; Trade-offs:</b> What are the risks &amp; trade-offs associated with different degrees of regulation for the topic and what is acceptable?</li> <li>+ <b>Consequences:</b> What is the most cost-effective way to regulate the topic to achieve the desired outcome – for the public, businesses and government?</li> <li>+ <b>Consistency and timeliness of approval processes:</b> Would the degree of regulation affect permitting and approval processes?</li> <li>+ <b>Predictability:</b> Are the regulations and associated permitting requirements understandable and predictable?</li> <li>+ <b>Land use impact:</b> The degree of regulation should be proportionate to the potential impact of not regulating.</li> <li>+ <b>City impact on local scale and city-wide scale:</b> The degree and method of regulation must consider whether the impact of the topic applies locally or city-wide.</li> <li>+ <b>Monitoring:</b> Can the regulation be monitored for effectiveness and continued relevance?</li> </ul>

Note: The decision making framework is still in development. The framework is meant to serve as advice for Administration and decision makers. As the priorities and needs of Edmontonians and City Council change, the framework will also adapt accordingly.

## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Edmonton has changed dramatically since the current Zoning Bylaw was first drafted. Over the years, regulations have been added and amended to keep the Zoning Bylaw functional, but outdated regulations have remained in place. **This band aid approach has resulted in an overly complex and restrictive bylaw that does not support current city building goals or allow for innovative and sustainable designs.**

A new Zoning Bylaw presents a unique opportunity to question what the City regulates in terms of land development, why we regulate certain things and the impact those regulations have on the development process. It forces us to ask what the Zoning Bylaw should and shouldn't control, and how much control it should have in each instance. Regulations need to balance reducing regulatory burden with achieving policy outcomes in order to enable people, places and businesses to thrive and prosper, both now and in the future.

This is easier said than done. A series of discussion papers are being prepared to explore the various aspects of zoning and the Zoning

Bylaw, and provide the preliminary thinking and direction for the bylaw's new regulatory framework. These demonstrate how the City will achieve the vision, goals, outcomes and directions outlined in ConnectEdmonton, The Draft City Plan and other City policies. Edmontonians are encouraged to explore the topics that interest them and provide feedback through [Engage Edmonton platform](#). This feedback will help set the direction of the new Zoning Bylaw and subsequent implementation.



## GET INVOLVED!

- Submit your feedback about the discussion papers at [engaged.edmonton.ca](https://engaged.edmonton.ca)
- Visit [edmonton.ca/zoningbylawrenewal](https://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](mailto:zoningbylawrenewal@edmonton.ca)



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