



District Planning

Edmonton

Frequently Asked Questions



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Introduction

This document provides an overview of Frequently Asked Questions related to the District Planning project. You may also find more information about the project and draft District General Policy and district plans on the project website.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is District Planning being introduced?

The concept of “districts” was introduced by The City Plan. The District Planning project will help:

- + Simplify Edmonton’s planning system
- + Integrate the physical systems and networks necessary to support 15 minute community concept
- + Take a more equitable approach to planning and design, investment and development.

District Planning provides:

- + A more consistent approach to planning across the city and application of city-wide land use policies
- + A more coordinated planning approach at a larger scale than at the neighbourhood level
- + A new geographic boundary that supports The City Plan’s Big City Move a “Community of Communities”
- + The introduction of plans that can and will be updated, maintained and adapted over time, and
- + A more accessible planning document for all Edmontonians

For more information, see [Conversation Starter #1: What is the District Planning Project?](#)

Will I have everything I need in my district?

Districts are not intended to be self-contained. The intention is to move Edmonton towards a city where everyone enjoys access to amenities and services within a 15 minute walk, roll, cycle or transit ride from their home. The 15 minute catchment for any household could cross over and into other districts.



What are district plans?

Districts are collections of neighbourhoods that together provide a range of destinations, services and amenities and act as a gathering place. District plans will translate The City Plan's policies for each of the 15 districts and include any specific considerations for that district's geographical makeup.

District plans will guide planning in parts of the city without existing area plan(s) in effect or parts of the city with an existing area plan that's still providing development guidance in line with The City Plan. District Plans will replace those area plans that have been completed and/or do not comply with The City Plan. District Plans will form the principal policy document guiding the physical change of communities, their systems and networks as envisioned in the The City Plan.

For more information, see [Conversation Starter #2: What are the District General Policy and District Plans?](#)

How will district plans impact me and my neighbourhood?

For residents, District plans communicate the City's current policies and intentions for land use, mobility and renewal efforts to inform recommendations and decisions. They will help manage future growth and opportunities within a district while providing greater access and connection to housing, schools, recreation and employment locally.

Why do we have a District General Policy for all districts?

The District General Policy will help phase The City Plan's implementation. The City Plan presents a vision for Edmonton at 2 million people, but it will take decades for the city to reach that population. Rather than applying all The City Plan's changes now, the District General Policy can gradually guide growth to the 1.25 million population horizon in a way that is in line with current development patterns and trends.

For more information, see [Conversation Starter #2: What are the District General Policy and District Plans?](#)



When would I need to look at my District General Policy and district plan?

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 when:

- + 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

For more information, see [Conversation Starter #5: How are the District General Policy and District Plans Intended to be Used?](#)

How are the District General Policy and district plans being drafted?

District Planning is focused on guiding growth to 1.25 million, the first population horizon identified in The City Plan towards the goal of 2 million people. In addition to drawing directions from The City Plan, to draft the District General Policy and the district plans, we also included approved and relevant policies from existing plans or strategies that align with The City Plan.

To learn more, check out [Conversation Starter #3: How are the District General Policy and District Plans being drafted?](#)



What is the District Planning process for determining the proposed plan repeals, amendments or retainments?

The District Planning project team reviewed every area plan within the city, and a recommendation for plan repeal, amendment or retainment is based on whether the:

- + Has planned parkland been registered in the City's inventory? – If yes, the plan is eligible for repeal.
- + Is the zoning in place as intended by the area plan? – If yes, the plan is eligible for repeal.
- + Would the proposed repeal of an area plan result in the addition of a significant number of policies to a district plan? – If yes, the plan is not recommended for repeal.

Area plans that are proposed for repeal or amendment undergo a policy-by-policy review. Each policy statement or direction within an area plan is reviewed to determine whether to retain the policy direction in Table 4.1 - District Specific Policy Table of the district plan or not. Repealed or retained plans and policies may also inform a district plan's maps.

For more information, read this [Draft List of Proposed Area Plan Repeals, Amendments and Retainments](#).

How will my ideas and feedback be used?

The district plans were made using content in The City Plan and existing approved plans. Because of that, we are asking for your ideas about very specific parts of the plans. We aren't creating new thoughts, ideas or visions through the District Planning project. We are just making sure that what we've put in the district plans matches with what's in The City Plan and other plans.

In this regard, we are asking you to share your feedback ("advise" on the City of Edmonton's Public Engagement spectrum) and also to adapt the district plans that have been already written ("refine").

For more information, see [Conversation Starter #4: How can Edmontonians Provide Input?](#)



How did you factor GBA+ into plan development?

A GBA+ equity lens is being applied throughout the project. District Planning engagement intentionally includes marginalized individuals or groups and adopts best practices for diversity and inclusion. The project is adopting equity measures to facilitate the inclusion of equity-seeking groups in proposed policy, project communications and engagement. Finally, the project team will make recommendations to Council at Public Hearing.

As a result of the District Planning project scope, the project team is constrained on what they can adjust in policy intent as any new or altered planning direction is beyond the project scope. At Public Hearing, the evidence-based recommendations set forward by the project team will inform and advise Council on how City staff can continue to address the inequities in Edmonton's planning system as it pertains to District Planning.

Will rezonings in a community be paused until district plans are completed?

While district plans are not in place, City staff's recommendations will include guidance from The City Plan and existing area [plans in effect](#). The City Plan reflects Council's recently adopted vision for our city based on engagement with Edmontonians over the last couple of years.

A moratorium is not necessary for two main reasons:

- + Statutory plans that are inconsistent with the Municipal Development Plan (i.e. The City Plan) can be amended on an incremental basis as required, supported by technical information, approved plans and policy, and public engagement.
- + District plans will not introduce any new planning visions or policy directions and would inform what is already intended through The City Plan and existing plans in effect that align with it.

How will district plans change?

Two primary categories of change are expected to occur throughout the life of district plans. They are proactive changes made by the City and responsive changes initiated by the development industry, community groups and the public.

For more information, see [Conversation Starter #6: How will the District General Policy and District Plans be Monitored and Updated?](#)



What is the difference between the 2 Million Node and Corridor Boundary and 1.25 Million Intensification Areas and how were they determined?

The City Plan identifies Nodes and Corridors as areas for future development and “intensification” (see The City Plan Map 3: Nodes and Corridors Network). District plans define the boundaries for each node and corridor when Edmonton reaches 2 million people. However, Edmonton will look much different at 1.25 million people than at 2 million people. Intensification Areas within Nodes and Corridors in district plan maps are expected to be the main focus for change and intensification from now until we reach 1.25 million Edmontonians.

Any development outside these boundaries may still be approved provided it meets the contextual planning guidance provided in the District General Policy (e.g., site size and context, scale, massing, transition, available amenities, historic resource considerations, etc). Development might still be appropriate, but it would be reviewed on a case by case basis as part of the rezoning process.

What can I expect from development next to, or outside Node and Corridor Boundaries?

Redevelopment will still be allowed outside of Nodes and Corridors. How tall and dense a new development will be outside of these two areas will depend on relevant policy, proximity to mobility hubs, mass transit stations and context. For example, the District General Policy includes several policies on urban design to ensure a proper transition from high density/large scale development to low density/small scale development. However, Intensification Areas are where redevelopment proposals will receive the strongest support.

Where are high rises appropriate?

High rises are considered appropriate within the Intensification Areas of Centre City, Major Node, District Node or Primary Corridors or on sites close to Mass Transit Stations (i.e., within a 400m distance). The appropriate scale of development within Nodes and Corridors is described in the [Nodes and Corridors Network section of The City Plan](#) and within the [District General Policy](#).



What is the relationship between the district plan’s Priority Nodes and Corridors and the Growth Management Framework (GMF) Priority Growth Areas. Which one will inform the other?

Priority Nodes and Corridors (in district plans) and Priority Growth Areas (GMF) are synonymous. The Growth Activation part (Section 5) of the district plan identifies any Priority Node and Corridors (found in Figure 6.10: Growth Activation) and explains the City of Edmonton's role in your district's growth. Priority Nodes and Corridors are locations defined by the Growth Management Framework.

What is the relationship between District Planning and Zoning Bylaw Renewal?

District Planning and the [Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative](#) will work together to implement The City Plan’s land use concept, laying the foundation for Growth Management to active Nodes and Corridors.

District Planning translates The City Plan’s city-wide policies into 15 districts across the city. The resulting district plans will inform how the new Zoning Bylaw regulates certain land uses and activities, and guide where intensification and densification will happen in the future.