



Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative



Public Engagement Phase 3: Trending Topics

May - July 2023

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PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw is going through its first major overhaul in over 60 years, presenting a rare opportunity to rethink what the City of Edmonton regulates in terms of land and development.

In May 2023, the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative entered the final chapter of its multi-phase public engagement and invites you to share feedback on the latest draft of the new proposed Zoning Bylaw. The draft Zoning Bylaw's philosophy, principles, regulations and key shifts are guided by The City Plan's direction and represent years of research and feedback gathered from a wide range of Edmontonians and City Council.

Zoning determines what can be built where.

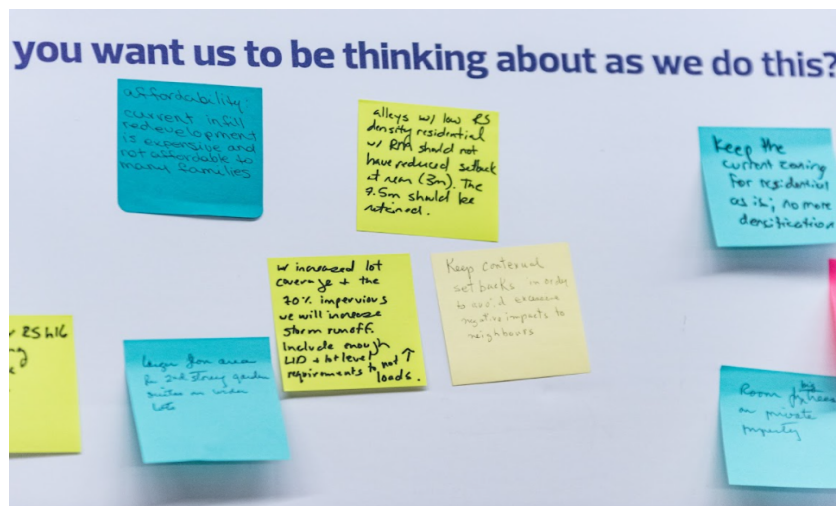
It sets the rules for where buildings should go, what types of buildings they can be and what types of businesses and activities can happen on a property.

Understanding changes

The Zoning Bylaw is an important regulatory tool to help make The City Plan's vision of a healthy, urban, climate-resilient city of two million people a reality. This will require change. While the Zoning Bylaw is complex and may seem far-removed from our everyday lives, its changes will fundamentally impact the way Edmonton's land, buildings and neighbourhoods are planned and developed. This document will help keep you "in the know" with brief one to two-page summaries on the Zoning Bylaw Renewal's *trending topics* — key proposed changes you should be aware of, as well as the most-asked topics the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative team has received.

The goals of this document are to help you:

- + Quickly access brief overviews of the draft Zoning Bylaw's key changes and most-asked topics
- + Understand the proposed changes and directions and how they may affect your property, business, neighbourhood and city
- + Provide feedback during the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative's final public engagement period running until July 30, 2023



How trending topics were determined

The Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative team has been listening to Edmontonians. Trending topics were determined based on the draft Zoning Bylaw's most-discussed and asked-about topics heard through previous public engagement sessions, stakeholder meetings, email inquiries, City Council meetings and more.

How to use this document

This document is one of the many engagement resources that can be found on engaged.edmonton.ca/zoningbylawrenewal. Note, this document's content is subject to change as the draft Zoning Bylaw continues to be refined. To navigate the document:

- + Jump to the document's interactive [Table of Contents](#) (also found in the bottom-right corner of each page) to see the full list of trending topics. Click on your topic of interest to learn more.
- + In the left-hand margin of each page, you'll find definitions or snippets of information relevant to the topic.
- + Note, throughout the document, various versions of the bylaw are referenced:
 - o **Zoning Bylaw 12800**: refers to Edmonton's current Zoning Bylaw
 - o **The draft Zoning Bylaw**: refers to the first draft of the new Zoning Bylaw that was released in September 2022 for public feedback.
 - o **The refined draft Zoning Bylaw**: refers to the updated draft of the new Zoning Bylaw that was released in May 2023 for public feedback. This version has been refined using engagement feedback from 2022.

Still have questions or want information on a different topic?

Send an email to zoningbylawrenewal@edmonton.ca or book a one-on-one ['Chat With a Planner' virtual meeting](#). Ready to share feedback? Head to [Engaged Edmonton](#).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Focused research, community conversations, discussions with stakeholder groups and public engagement has been part of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal process since 2018. To learn about previous public engagement dating from 2018 to 2021, visit the [initiative website](#).

2022 Engagement: Phase 2 (Develop & Build)

The City received more than 3,500 comments during engagement events and activities from September to December 2022.

From September 15 to December 23, 2022, Edmontonians were invited to provide feedback on:

- + The **draft Zoning Bylaw**: regulations that determine what can be built where in Edmonton
- + The **“Know Your Zone” Rezoning Map**: an interactive online map that shows a property’s current zone and future proposed zone
- + The **new online platform** that will house the Zoning Bylaw once in effect

A What We Heard Report summarizing activities and results from Phase 2 may be found [here](#). Feedback gathered during Phase 2 engagement was used to develop refined drafts of the new Zoning Bylaw and “Know Your Zone” Rezoning Map, which are the focal point of Phase 3 engagement.

2023 Engagement Opportunities: Phase 3 (Finalize & Adopt)

What am I sharing feedback on?

From May 1 to July 30, 2023 you are invited to share final feedback on:

- + The **refined draft Zoning Bylaw**: regulations that determine what can be built where in Edmonton
- + The **Overview of the New Zoning Bylaw**: a simpler, more condensed version of the bylaw complete with illustrations
- + The **refined “Know Your Zone” Rezoning Map**: an interactive online map that shows a property’s current zone and future proposed zone

This is the final public engagement opportunity before the draft Zoning Bylaw and Rezoning Map are scheduled to be presented to City Council Public Hearing in October 2023.

The level of engagement for May 2023 was **REFINE**.



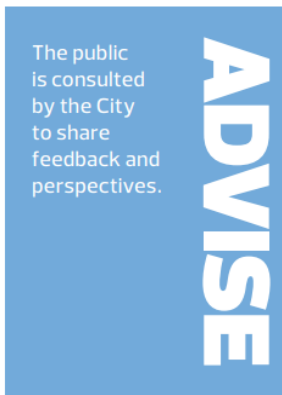
How did Edmontonians share feedback in May?

From May 1 to 30, 2023, Edmontonians were invited to share [Refine-level](#) feedback on [Engaged Edmonton](#) by:

- + Commenting on the [draft Zoning Bylaw](#) and [Overview of the New Zoning Bylaw](#) using the online guided feedback tool
- + Providing feedback directly on the Engaged Edmonton platform using the 'Ideas' tool
- + Attending a 90-minute interactive virtual information session to discuss the new Zoning Bylaw's changes and what it means for your neighbourhood.
 - + Thursday, May 18 (6:30 - 8:00 p.m.)
 - + Wednesday, May 24 (6:30 - 8:00 p.m.)
- + Booking time to 'Chat With a Planner' in a virtual one-on-one meeting

During this engagement period, Edmontonians asked for the opportunity to continue sharing feedback on the draft Zoning Bylaw. In response, the Zoning Bylaw Renewal team added a two-month Advise-level engagement period (see details below).

The level of engagement for July to July 2023 is **ADVISE**.



How can I share feedback in June and July? - WE ARE HERE!

From June 1 to July 30, 2023, Edmontonians are invited to share [Advise-level](#) feedback on the draft Zoning Bylaw by:

- + Taking a short online survey on [Engaged.Edmonton.ca](#)
- + Submitting a virtual idea using the Ideas tool on [Engaged.Edmonton.ca](#)
- + Emailing the Zoning Bylaw Renewal team at zoningbylawrenewal@edmonton.ca

After July 30, 2023, the Zoning Bylaw Renewal team will review all of the feedback gathered during this period. Any new or previously unconsidered comments may be used to refine the draft Zoning Bylaw before it is finalized and presented at the scheduled public hearing on October 16, 2023.

In order to balance timelines leading up to the public hearing in October, and to ensure implementation activities support a January 1, 2024 bylaw launch, feedback received after July 30, 2023 will not be eligible for consideration in the bylaw's final refinement.

As with other municipal bylaws, the work to update the bylaw with Edmontonian concerns or changing times is never officially done. We will be monitoring feedback on the new Zoning Bylaw throughout 2024 and beyond, and where things are not working as they should and new issues emerge, there will be opportunities for future amendments.

What educational resources are available to support me?

The [Engaged Edmonton](#) website contains various resources to help support your review, including:

- + **Frequently Asked Questions**
- + **Glossary of Key Terms**
- + **Modelling Documents:** Documents offering a glimpse of what Edmonton's future development could look like under the new Zoning Bylaw
- + **Rationale to Retire the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay:** Provides a detailed rationale for the City's approach to retiring the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay
- + **Rationale to Retire the Main Streets Overlay:** Provides a detailed rationale for the City's approach to retiring the Main Streets Overlay
- + **Phase 2 What We Heard Report:** Summarizes engagement activities and results from public engagement that took place from September through December 2022
- + **City Building Youtube Video Series:** A series of short videos featuring projects that will help implement The City Plan's long-term vision, including the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative
- + **Making Space Podcast:** The City's award-winning podcast on zoning that highlights stories of real people and communities whose lives have been impacted by how cities are planned

What's next?

Reimagining the Zoning Bylaw brings Edmonton one step closer to implementing The City Plan—and stakeholder feedback is critical to its success. During Phase 3 engagement, the City is listening to and learning from Edmontonians in order to make the final refinements to the draft Zoning Bylaw and Rezoning Map, which will help lead Edmonton to a healthy, urban and climate-resilient city of two million people - key goals of The City Plan.

The City will present the final draft of the Zoning Bylaw to [Urban Planning Committee](#) in June 2023. In October 2023, the new Zoning Bylaw and "Know Your Zone" Rezoning Map will then be presented to City Council at a Statutory Public Hearing, where the public will be invited to share their opinions with City Council. Pending the approval of the bylaws at public hearing in October 2023, the new bylaw and map will come into effect on January 1, 2024.

For regular initiative updates, please visit edmonton.ca/zoningbylawrenewal, call 311, or contact the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Team by email at zoningbylawrenewal@edmonton.ca

Edmontonians can receive monthly updates about the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative and related city-building projects by signing up for [The City Building Newsletter](#).

TRENDING TOPIC: BUILDING DESIGN

The Zoning Bylaw regulates various elements of building design to support visually attractive development in Edmonton and addresses impacts of different scales of development located next to each other (for example, a four-story building located next to a single-storey building). While the Zoning Bylaw does not regulate all building design components, it contains regulations that are intended to support attractive developments that are sensitive to their surrounding context.

For example, the (RS) Small-Scale Residential Zone requires multi-unit buildings facing a street or facing another residential site to use design techniques to reduce the impacts of the building mass and create visual interest, such as:

- + Variations in rooflines
- + Features such as windows, balconies or porches
- + Using a combination of finishing materials

Why is it trending?

Building design was an important topic that was raised by Edmontonians during the Phase 2 engagement. The first draft of the Zoning Bylaw that was publicly shared in 2022 contained a proposed Building Facade Design section that provided direction on how new development could incorporate different building design techniques to enhance a building and mitigate visual impacts.

The section included a list of proposed design techniques that could be used, providing more flexibility for development applicants to determine which technique to apply. Some techniques contained specific quantifiable or measurable outcomes (e.g. dimensions of projections and recessions), while some techniques were more subjective (e.g. use of colour or materials).

During Phase 2 engagement, many industry and community stakeholders shared that the proposed Building Facade Design section was unlikely to achieve its intended outcomes.

What's being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

- + Removing the entire Building Facade Design section
- + Instead, each zone will include regulations that are intended to achieve the general outcomes prescribed in the former building design section

The proposed building design regulations within zones are generally more performance-based and do not prescribe quantifiable or measurable outcomes. The regulations include a list of relevant techniques that could be used to achieve the intended outcomes.

A performance-based approach will support good urban design by providing flexibility for creativity and

innovation while mitigating land use impacts.

TRENDING TOPIC: CANNABIS

Zoning is not typically used to regulate the market of specific industries—including cannabis. However, the Zoning Bylaw *does* regulate separation distances between cannabis sales and other uses, such as schools, parks and libraries to promote public safety.

Why is it trending?

The City is open to new and emerging businesses to support economic development and investment in Edmonton. The Zoning Bylaw Renewal team has received public letters and inquiries regarding cannabis hospitality and tourism, including whether the new Zoning Bylaw will permit the consumption of cannabis within establishments like restaurants, spas or cannabis lounges. In addition, during Phase 2 engagement, Edmontonians asked how the City proposes to regulate cannabis consumption and separation distances under the new Zoning Bylaw.

Who regulates cannabis consumption?

The Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission (AGLC) is responsible for establishing regulations for cannabis lounges or consumption of cannabis in other establishments on behalf of the Alberta government, in accordance with the Gaming, Liquor, and Cannabis Regulation. Under this current regulation, on-site consumption of cannabis at retail locations and cannabis lounges is prohibited.

The City of Edmonton does not have the ability to rezone areas to allow cannabis consumption at restaurants, cafes or any other establishments until it becomes legal at the provincial level. If and when that were to occur, the City would have to review provincial regulations and determine the appropriate next steps.

The Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) Commission is responsible for regulating private retail cannabis licensing and the distribution of cannabis in accordance with the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Regulation.

Separation distances for cannabis stores

The Zoning Bylaw's cannabis store separation distance regulations are informed by a variety of factors, including provincial cannabis regulations, public engagement and the intent to provide evenly-distributed opportunities for cannabis store locations across the city.

In the current Zoning Bylaw 12800, cannabis stores require a separation distance of:

- + 200 m from another cannabis store
- + 200 m from a school or public library
- + 100 m from a recreation facility, public lands, provincial health care facility or land designated School Reserve or Municipal and School Reserve

The City's cannabis regulations must align with federal and provincial legislation.

The new Zoning Bylaw proposes to maintain these separation distances.

Implementing additional buffers to sensitive uses, such as daycares, was not recommended in order to preserve opportunities for business choice and locations. Although youth access to cannabis remains a primary concern, public engagement feedback indicated that stakeholders were most concerned about separation between cannabis stores and high schools. The 200 m separation distance required from the site of a cannabis store to the site of a public or private education service or hospital exceeds the 100 m separation distance required by the Government of Alberta in the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Regulation.

Edmonton's separation distances generally align with those regulated in other municipalities. The City will continue to monitor decisions related to cannabis stores and will conduct a review of separation distance requirements post-Zoning Bylaw Renewal to determine whether they should be reduced or removed. This would provide sufficient data and allow additional time for the broad public adjustment to cannabis legalization.

History of cannabis regulations in Edmonton

Prior to the legalization of cannabis in the fall of 2018, the City took proactive steps to prepare for the opening of cannabis stores and production facilities. The first step to ready Edmonton for legalized cannabis was to provide clarity through defined land uses in the Zoning Bylaw, and ensure that these uses were not inadvertently classified within existing uses. Amendments to Zoning Bylaw 12800 introduced three new use classifications—Cannabis Retail Sales, Cannabis Lounges and Cannabis Production and Distribution—and clarified a number of existing uses to include or exclude the sale or consumption of cannabis or other cannabis-related activities.

After developing a land use framework to guide the development of bylaws and processes regarding cannabis legalization, Council approved changes to Zoning Bylaw 12800 to include land use regulations that enabled cannabis retail sales and cannabis production and distribution facilities. The amendments included assigning these new uses to zones and setting out specific development regulations, or mitigation approaches.

Learn more:

- + Additional information about the Alberta Cannabis Framework and Legislation can be found on their [website](#)
- + Read the [Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Regulation](#)

TRENDING TOPIC: CREMATORIUM SEPARATION DISTANCES

The Zoning Bylaw requires a minimum separation distance between crematoriums and uses including residential uses, daycares and schools.

Why is it trending?

Concerns surrounding crematorium separation distances, particularly health and environmental impacts associated with emissions, have been raised at previous City Council Public Hearings. During Phase 2 engagement, Edmontonians and City Council asked how the new Zoning Bylaw proposes to regulate crematorium separation distances and provided their feedback on the proposed approach.

What's being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

- + Introduce a new 'Crematorium' use to specifically regulate this activity and differentiate it from other uses
- + Permit crematoriums in more industrial and non-residential areas, including the (CB) Business Commercial, (BE) Business Employment and (IM) Medium Industrial Zones
- + Locate crematoriums 300 m from uses including residential uses, daycares and schools to address potential nuisances, while ensuring there are still reasonable opportunities for these businesses to locate within city limits. The regulations also enable the Development Planner to require cremation systems to be installed per the manufacturer's specifications, where necessary to minimize a nuisance.

How were separation distances developed?

A jurisdictional scan of how other municipalities regulate crematoriums identified that other Canadian cities tend to restrict this use to industrial zones or as an accessory activity to cemeteries. Some municipalities and provinces apply separation distance requirements between residential areas and crematoriums ranging from 60 m to a maximum of 300 m.

During Phase 2 engagement, Administration received mixed feedback from Edmontonians on where crematoriums should be located. Feedback identified a desire to require a larger minimum separation distance (in the range of 500 m to 1000 m) between crematoriums and residential and commercial uses, schools and daycares. Feedback also indicated that the separation distance should not be reduced based on a previously proposed regulation that would have provided guidance to the Development Planner to consider a variance to the separation distance based on an environmental site assessment.

Crematoriums are licenced under the Cemeteries Act, but are not covered by the provincial Code of Practice for Small Incinerators.

Cremation is regulated in Zoning Bylaw 12800 under the Funeral, Cremation and Interment Services Use, and is listed as a discretionary use in multiple commercial and industrial zones. Currently, there are no specific regulations or separation distances that apply to crematoriums.

The proposed separation distance is larger than in some jurisdictions across Canada but considers the public's desire to separate crematoriums from these uses.

Development Permit notification requirements can be found in Section 7.160 of the draft Zoning Bylaw.

***Permitted use** means those uses of land, buildings or structures for which Development Permits must be issued by the Development Planner if the development meets all applicable regulations.*

***Class A** development permits are proposed to be renamed to **Permitted Development**.*

***Discretionary use** means those uses of land, buildings or structures for which Development Permits may be issued only at the discretion of the Development Planner.*

***Class B** development permits are proposed to be renamed*

TRENDING TOPIC: DEVELOPMENT PERMIT NOTIFICATIONS

The Zoning Bylaw contains the rules for who must be notified for certain kinds of development, as well as when they must be notified in the development process. Some kinds of notifications enable feedback that may influence the development permit decision or outcome, while others are for information only.

Why is it trending?

The draft Zoning Bylaw proposes to make changes to the types of development that require mailed notification at various stages of the development process. These proposed amendments will change how some Edmontonians are notified of development happening in their area.

Shifting to Permitted Uses

Currently, every zone in Zoning Bylaw 12800 lists uses that are either permitted or discretionary.

- + Where an activity is a permitted use in a zone, and that activity complies with all the applicable development regulations, it is considered a Class A Permitted Development, and the Development Planner **must** issue a development permit.
- + Where an activity is a discretionary use in the zone, it is considered a Class B Discretionary Development. The Development Planner must review the application with additional scrutiny to make sure that the new development is suitable for the proposed location, including referencing statutory plans in effect. Even if the proposed development meets all development regulations, the Development Planner could refuse the application if they find that the activity is not compatible with the policy direction or surrounding context. However, the Class B development process results in longer development permit timelines as well as less transparent and predictable decision making. This creates uncertainty for both applicants and communities on what may be allowed in a zone and under what circumstances development may be approved.

What's being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

- + Consolidating a number of uses by grouping activities (based on their similar common function or land use impacts) to allow for a greater range of activities to occur in a building or space.
- + Recategorizing most uses in most zones from discretionary to permitted uses.

to **Discretionary Development**.

Shifting away from discretionary uses is intended to provide greater certainty for Edmontonians in the development review process. To support this shift, additional regulations for specific permitted uses are being proposed within zones and in the specific development regulations section (Part 6 of the bylaw) that would need to be met in order for a development permit for that use to be approved. This shift means that there will no longer be a notification or practical right to appeal associated with permitted uses, except for when an application proposes to vary a regulation for one of these uses.

Specific Development Regulations for certain uses can be found in Part 6 of the draft Zoning Bylaw.

Class A Notification Letters

In 2017, Zoning Bylaw 12800 was amended to require residents within the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay to be notified of new Class A infill development (including demolition) happening next door or across the lane from their property, through a Class A notification letter.

Class A developments comply with the Zoning Bylaw and **must** be approved by the Development Planner. However, Class A notification letters may give the impression that individuals can influence a development permit decision when in fact there is no practical right to appeal.

What's being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

- + Retire Class A notification letters. This proposed change is intended to make more efficient use of City resources while still providing options for Edmontonians to access information about permitted development.
- + Maintain the requirement of placing a development permit notification sign on a property within 14 days of an issued development permit for development (including for demolition).
- + Establish a new requirement to publish all development permit decisions on a public webpage.

Retiring Class A notification letters may reduce the impression that individuals can influence a development permit when there is no practical right to appeal.

Community Consultation Letters

Under Zoning Bylaw 12800, development permit applications requiring one or more variances within the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay and the Main Streets Overlay, and where secondhand stores or pawn stores are discretionary uses within the Secondhand Stores and Pawn Stores Overlay, a 21-day consultation period with surrounding property owners is required before a discretionary development permit can be issued.

These development permit applications are considered Class B Discretionary Development. These are also subject to an additional 21-day notification period following the issuance of the development permit where neighbouring property owners can appeal the Development Planner's decision if they feel they will be negatively affected by the decision.

Discretionary developments are still subject to a 21-day post-issuance notification period where neighbours can appeal if they feel they will be

negatively affected by the development.

Notice of Discretionary Developments are proposed to be sent to both the property owner and to non-owner occupants to improve equity in the process.

What's being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

- + Retire the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay, Main Streets Overlay, High Rise Residential Overlay and the Secondhand Stores and Pawn Stores Overlay.
- + As these overlays are retired, so is the requirement to send notification of a development permit application prior to the decision. This proposed shift reduces uncertainty for applicants and surrounding residents and businesses, while also reducing application timelines.

TRENDING TOPIC: HOME BASED BUSINESSES

Home based businesses support Edmonton's entrepreneurs while providing daily services and amenities close to where people live. The Zoning Bylaw is proposing to rethink where home based businesses may be located and how they can be better integrated into Edmonton's neighbourhoods.

Why is it trending?

The Zoning Bylaw is looking to expand opportunities for Edmontonians to live and conduct business within the comforts of their home. During Phase 2 engagement, the Zoning Bylaw Renewal team received many questions and feedback about this proposed approach, including how the new bylaw proposes to limit some of the potential impacts of expanding home based business opportunities.

What's being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

The refined draft Zoning Bylaw proposes some regulations that reduce barriers for home based businesses in Edmonton, while other proposed regulations are intended to minimize potential impacts to neighbourhoods.

The new Zoning Bylaw proposes:

- + Allowing home based businesses to operate out of an accessory building, such as a garage.
- + Allowing home based businesses to have higher visibility from the street. For example, a small bakery or hair salon would be able to have a larger business sign and make some exterior alterations to the building to make the bakery or salon more noticeable.
- + Introducing regulations to minimize home based business impacts on neighbourhoods, such as restricting home based businesses from creating a nuisance, storing equipment and materials outside, storing any dangerous goods or materials on site and prohibiting sound systems or any outdoor business activity.
- + Allowing the Development Planner to impose conditions to hours of operation or the number of group visits where it's deemed to be necessary to mitigate potential nuisances.

Are there businesses that can't be permitted as home based businesses?

Businesses such as bars, body rub centres, cannabis retail stores, liquor stores and nightclubs are proposed **not** to be allowed to operate as a home based business under the refined draft Zoning Bylaw.

TRENDING TOPIC: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability is tied to a number of factors, many of which are beyond the City's control, such as housing market demands, cost of building materials and mortgage interest rates, among others. Zoning is one of the factors the City does have control over that can help influence housing choice, housing supply and affordability.

Why is it trending?

The housing affordability crisis in Canada has been an area of focus for City Council, Administration and Edmontonians. The Zoning Bylaw Renewal team has received public letters and inquiries regarding how the changes proposed in the draft Zoning Bylaw will support housing affordability.

What's being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

- + Developing zoning regulations that allow diverse housing types in all neighbourhoods and reducing the number of residential zones by combining similar zones together. This gives both market and non-market housing providers the ability to build a broader range of housing options without the time, cost and uncertainty that would otherwise come with rezoning the land. For example, the proposed (RS) Small Scale Residential Zone is intended to replace 5 current residential zones (in whole or in part). This zone also allows row housing and small-scale apartments up to three storeys.
- + Removing regulatory barriers to make the development process more predictable and to shorten approval timelines by simplifying what we regulate and ensuring we are regulating the "right" things. Shorter and more predictable development permit timelines will reduce the costs associated with the land development process.
- + Allowing gentle density increases and mixed-use development to help support and make more efficient use of the City's current and future infrastructure (such as roads, transit and sewers) and amenity (such as recreation centres and parks) investments, which saves taxpayers money.

What about gentrification?

There are many factors that contribute to gentrification, some of which are beyond the City's control. Redeveloping existing neighbourhoods may have gentrification impacts, regardless of zoning changes. Still, by opening opportunities for a wide range of housing types across the city, potential is limited for any one area to see the bulk of future redevelopment and experience gentrification. The proposed new Zoning Bylaw supports different housing options throughout the city, including supportive housing, lodging houses and multi-unit housing, allowing the possibility for people of different socioeconomic situations to find housing that works for them.

Gentrification is the process of lower-income areas changing over time to become higher-income, and often displacing existing residents, as new development and businesses are introduced.

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The Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative created a [GBA+ and Equity Toolkit](#) to help identify current zoning inequities, determine how to prevent them with the new Zoning Bylaw and monitor the impact of new regulations moving forward.

While zoning is one tool at the City's disposal to address gentrification, other mechanisms are available, including affordable housing policies. Making redevelopment possible, while also prioritizing affordability, will allow the City to be nimble in making policy changes.

TRENDING TOPIC: RESIDENTIAL ZONES

The City Plan calls for future population growth to be contained within current city boundaries, meaning our existing neighbourhoods will need to accommodate 50% of new homes.

Residential neighbourhoods will welcome more people at all stages of life through incremental infill and gentle density.

The City Plan outlines choices that need to be made for Edmonton to be a healthy, urban, climate-resilient city of two million people that supports a prosperous region. Welcoming an additional million residents within Edmonton's existing boundaries requires change — and Edmontonians have said that sustainability, the environment and affordability are key.

As Edmonton grows to two million, it is important that everyone has a place to call home. The new Zoning Bylaw proposes to regulate the things that matter most to Edmontonians while offering flexibility to enable diverse housing options across all neighbourhoods.

Why is it trending?

Neighbourhoods are the places where Edmontonians live, spend time with friends, connect with neighbours and watch their kids play and grow up. The new Zoning Bylaw proposes a number of changes to Edmonton's residential zones, including reimagining how to welcome new development across the city's existing neighbourhoods. Change can be difficult, but it is necessary to make The City Plan's vision a reality.

This section provides a summary of key residential zone changes proposed in the new Zoning Bylaw for residential zones, as well as information on related trending topics like setbacks and building height, rooftop terraces and community and commercial uses. Check out the [Overview of the Zoning Bylaw](#) to learn more about the new proposed residential zones.

What key residential changes are being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

The refined draft Zoning Bylaw proposes a number of key changes to welcome more and diverse housing options for Edmontonians across all neighbourhoods, including:

- + Enabling a greater variety of small-scale residential development by combining different housing types into a single residential use
- + Reducing the number of residential zones by combining similar zones together. For example, the proposed (RS) Small Scale Residential Zone is intended to replace five similar residential zones, in whole or in part
- + Retiring the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay and incorporating certain regulations into the new residential zones

These proposed changes are intended to enable infill in Edmonton's redeveloping areas incrementally, simplify the Zoning Bylaw and reduce the number of required rezonings.

Built form refers to the shape, function, and configuration of a building, as well as how it relates to streets and other public spaces.

How is the Zoning Bylaw focusing on form?

The new Zoning Bylaw also proposes a number of changes to how the built form of residential development will be regulated, including:

- + Regulating the physical size and location of buildings, while allowing flexibility in how dwellings may be arranged within a building or on a site
- + Allowing up to three storeys in height for development in the small scale residential zones
- + Enabling more flexibility in where housing can be located on a lot
- + Introducing facade length regulations to reduce massing impact
- + Maintaining contextual setback requirements for taller buildings that share a property line with smaller scale development

These changes are intended to support new and innovative housing forms while also ensuring that new and existing development are compatible.

Approach to Residential Uses

With a single residential use, zones will no longer control the exact number or type of dwellings allowed on a specific property. This will allow for other types of living arrangements, such as supportive housing and lodging houses, as well as other housing forms, like multi-unit housing, to occur in any neighbourhood where needed.

With these changes, neighbourhoods can expect to see a range of different housing forms, some of which may be new to neighbourhoods. These include:

- + Multi-unit housing forms, such as row housing and small apartments
- + Cluster housing arrangements, such as houses arranged around a central courtyard
- + Backyard Housing (formerly known as Garden Suites)

Setbacks and Height

A setback is how far back the building is located from the property line at the ground level. A stepback is the portion of a building that is pushed back above a certain height.

Rules such as setbacks, site coverage, minimum site area and height maximums will create practical limitations on how big buildings can be and where on a property they can be located. This approach creates the “box” that the building must fit within, while providing flexibility for how the dwellings inside the box can be arranged. Setbacks and height were among the most discussed topics during Phase 2 engagement.

(RS) Small Scale Residential Zone

The new Zoning Bylaw's (RS) Small Scale Residential Zone proposes:

*The **RS Zone** is intended to replace several low-density zones in the current Zoning Bylaw. It will apply to redeveloping areas (areas generally within the Anthony Henday).*

- + A maximum height of 10.5 m, which is higher than what is currently allowed in equivalent zones (an increase from 8.9 m within the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay and 10 m outside the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay, respectively). The height increase is intended to equalize development opportunity across all redeveloping neighbourhoods, support diverse housing options and allow more flexibility for three-storey buildings.
- + A rear setback of 10.0 m, which is an increase from the standard zone setback of 7.5 m, but a reduction from the current Mature Neighbourhood Overlay requirement of 40% of site depth (which typically results in rear yards of 12 m or more). The proposed rear setback simplifies the regulation while maintaining space for a rear yard.
- + A standard minimum front setback of 4.5 m, which provides a more consistent and simpler requirement than either the standard zone setback which can range from 3.0 m to 4.5 m, and the current Mature Neighbourhood Overlay requirement which varies depending on the front setback of neighbouring properties. The intent of this change is to allow for the efficient use of land and encourage a built form with a stronger relationship to the street while still providing space for landscaping in all contexts. The current version of this proposal was informed in part in response to Phase 2 engagement feedback.

*The **RSF Zone** combines multiple existing small scale zones into a single zones. It will apply to the developing areas (areas generally outside the Anthony Henday).*

(RSF) Small Scale Flex Residential Zone

The new Zoning Bylaw's (RSF) Small Scale Flex Residential Zone proposes:

- + A maximum height of 12.0 m to enable three-storey development that is typical of housing found in developing areas.
- + A smaller rear setback of 6.0 m to allow for shallow lots, flexibility in backyard depth and account for unique lot conditions such as corner cuts on corner lots.
- + A greater range of housing types and arrangement is proposed to provide more housing choices (such as zero lot line development and reduced setback development).

Rooftop Terraces

Rooftop terraces will continue to be permitted on residential development, along with a few proposed changes:

- + Privacy screening is proposed to no longer be regulated and is up to the property owner to install where desired.

- + Rooftop terraces are proposed to be permitted on top of backyard housing to allow additional outdoor amenity area.
- + Regulations will limit the size of elevator and stairway accesses to rooftop terraces in order to reduce massing impacts on adjacent properties.

Commercial & Community Uses

The new Zoning Bylaw proposes to enable a greater diversity of non-residential uses in small-scale residential zones, including limited commercial uses, by allowing them to occur at specific locations. These changes are intended to provide Edmontonians with access to amenities and services to meet their daily needs closer to where they live and foster more complete, compact 15-minute communities.

Businesses and community services will be required to abide by other bylaws that regulate nuisance factors, including the Community Standards Bylaw.

The following uses are proposed to be permitted in the (RS) Small Scale Residential Zone and (RSF) Small Scale Flex Residential Zone:

| Commercial Uses | Community Services Uses |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Food and Drink Service + Indoor Sales and Service + Office + Residential Sales Centres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Child Care Service + Community Service + Special Event |

Regulations are proposed in the new Zoning Bylaw to limit the size and nuisance potential of non-residential uses in small scale neighbourhoods, including locational criteria for where non-residential uses may be permitted.

Opportunities for commercial and community uses such as offices, hair salons and childcare facilities are proposed in locations with convenient access and visibility, for example:

- + Allowing certain business types such as a small restaurant, retail store or office next to existing non-residential sites in residential zones.
- + Community services such as religious facilities or daycares are allowed next to commercial sites, as well as corner sites along certain types of roadways. There will also be size restrictions for these types of businesses and services to ensure that they are well integrated into existing neighbourhoods.

These restrictions will also prevent large-scale commercial businesses or community services, such as box stores or large churches or temples, to be located in small-scale neighbourhoods.

TRENDING TOPIC: RIVER VALLEY ZONING

The Zoning Bylaw is one of the City's tools to regulate development and activities that occur in the natural areas and parkland along the river, creeks and ravines and supports the protection of Edmonton's river valley, a critical natural ecosystem in the city.

Why is it trending?

Edmonton's river valley was one of the most asked-about topics during Phase 2 engagement. The City Plan describes the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System as "the most important feature of our city". It is a vital ecological corridor, a valuable recreational destination and a place of cultural significance. As a result, there are many perspectives on how the river valley should be regulated.

River Valley Zones

Activities in the river valley and ravine system are proposed to be regulated through the following zones in the new Zoning Bylaw:

- + **River Valley (A) Zone** (currently called the Metropolitan Recreation Zone): Preserves natural areas and parkland along the river, creeks, ravines and other areas designated for environmental protection, while allowing for passive and active park uses in designated areas.
- + **River Valley Special Area Zone** (currently called the River Valley Activity Node Zone): Regulates parkland activity nodes within the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System to allow for recreation and environmental protection in specific areas.
- + **Natural Areas (NA) Zone**: Conserves, preserves and restores identified natural areas, features and ecological processes.

Retaining Discretionary Uses

A significant change proposed through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative is shifting away from discretionary uses to permitted uses, in order to reduce permit review times and create a more predictable decision-making process ([read more about this above](#)).

However, the new Zoning Bylaw proposes to classify the majority of uses in zones applying to the river valley and ravine system as discretionary uses. This is intended to support river valley and ravine system preservation by ensuring that new development is aligned with statutory plans and provides Development Planners with discretion when reviewing proposed development.

For example, if a proposed development were a permitted use, even if it did not align with the River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan or the Ribbon of Green Plan, provided that the proposed development met the regulations of the Zoning Bylaw, it would be considered an "as of right development" and be issued as Permitted Development. However, if the proposed development is a discretionary use, the Development Planner is required to

consider statutory plans. By maintaining discretionary uses, the new Zoning Bylaw will maintain the connection to the River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan and Ribbon of Green Plan during the development review process.

Overlay means additional development regulations that are superimposed on specific areas of the Zoning Map that supersede or add to the development regulations of an underlying Zone. Overlays are used to achieve local planning objectives, such as protecting the environment or reducing risk.

Overlays

While the new Zoning Bylaw proposes many overlays to be retired, the following are proposed to be retained to protect Edmonton's ecosystems and keep residents safe:

- + **North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System Protection Overlay:** Ensures that the risks associated with top-of-bank landslides, erosions and other environmental hazards continue to be mitigated.
- + **Floodplain Protection Overlay:** Ensures that additional considerations are made for development in the floodplain, which is critical for resident safety and mitigating impacts to properties and infrastructure from catastrophic flooding.

Alignment with the River Valley Planning Modernization

The City's Zoning Bylaw Renewal team is working closely with the River Valley Planning Modernization team as they complete the Ribbon of Green Plan and modernize the River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan to align the new Zoning Bylaw and key components of the river valley planning framework.

As the River Valley Planning Modernization work is still underway and has not yet been approved by City Council, implementing the detailed aspects of that project falls outside of the current Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative's scope. Following completion and City Council approval of the River Valley Planning Modernization project, Administration may initiate amendments to the Zoning Bylaw or to zone boundaries, as needed, to align with plans. In the interim, the Zoning Bylaw Renewal team is seeking to align river valley zones with the direction in the current River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, The City Plan and other statutory plans currently in effect.

TRENDING TOPIC: SUPPORTING CLIMATE RESILIENCY

To support a more climate-resilient Edmonton, the new Zoning Bylaw proposed changes that support actions found in the Community Energy Transition Strategy and Action Plan and the Climate Resilient Edmonton: Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan.

The City recognizes that addressing Edmonton's climate risks requires activating different tools, one of which is the Zoning Bylaw, in order to reduce carbon emissions and create more climate-resilient communities.

Why is it trending?

This is a critical decade for the environment and climate action. Decisions made today about how the city is designed and built will, in part, set the course for Edmonton's future climate resilience. During Phase 2 engagement, Edmontonians asked how the Zoning Bylaw proposes to support greater climate resiliency.

What's being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

The proposed Zoning Bylaw will set an example of how cities can reduce their carbon emissions by becoming more compact and complete communities.

The new Zoning Bylaw proposes to:

- + Allow more density and create a more compact urban form by enabling a wider range of dwellings that can be built on a lot in all neighbourhoods.
- + Introduce standard mixed-use zones to reduce the need to travel long distances to access daily needs including employment, education and other amenities.
- + Support the evolution of Edmonton's neighbourhoods into becoming 15-minute communities by enabling a greater diversity of non-residential uses in small scale residential zones and expanding home-based business opportunities
- + Maintain the removal of minimum parking requirements and support the viability of using other mobility options - by enhancing bike parking requirements and including Transit Facility as a permitted use in multiple zones
- + Continue to allow height exemptions and reduced setbacks for renewable energy devices and not requiring development permits for solar panels
- + Promote urban agricultural activities by exempting development permit requirements in low-risk areas and on or in a building
- + Protect agricultural lands from further fragmentation and conversion to other land uses in partnership with regional municipalities
- + Ensure regulations are not barriers to improving energy efficiency performance through the National Building Code (Alberta Edition)
- + Protect floodplains by continuing to limit development in flood-risk areas and require flood-proof design for development in flood-risk areas
- + Continue to limit impermeable surfaces for small scale residential developments

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- + Increase requirements for tree and shrubs for new large-scale residential developments, increase tree requirements in parking areas, improving the retention of trees and shrubs through enhanced incentives and require on-site landscaping to include diverse plant materials

What are these changes intended to do?

A transformation towards higher density built form and more diverse land uses that include opportunities for housing, recreation, schools and employment will support more mobility options, make more efficient use of City infrastructure and reduce outward growth.

Learn more:

- + Read the [Community Energy Transition Strategy and Action Plan](#) and the [Climate Resilient Edmonton: Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan](#)

Based on the Phase 2 engagement feedback, Context Modifiers have been renamed to **Zone Modifiers**.

TRENDING TOPIC: ZONE MODIFIERS

Zone Modifiers are a new tool proposed in the draft Zoning Bylaw which will be used to tailor regulations to a specific context— all while allowing the rest of the zone to remain the same. Zone Modifiers can be changed depending on the context of the site and policy direction provided by district plans, The City Plan and other relevant City policies and approved by City Council at a City Council Public Hearing

Why is it trending?

Zone Modifiers were one of the most asked-about topics during Phase 2 engagement. As a new tool, Edmontonians and stakeholders wanted more information on what modifiers were being proposed and how they were intended to work.

What’s being proposed in the refined draft Zoning Bylaw?

- + Zone Modifiers allow development regulations to be adjusted in different ways so the same zone can be applied across multiple contexts without changing the essence of the zone such as its allowable uses, setbacks and other regulations.
- + The proposed Zone Modifiers will establish development intensity with respect to **height** and **floor area ratio (FAR)** and require **commercial frontage** at ground level in specific areas to maintain and reinforce existing commercial on main streets or as directed through policy.

How will Zone Modifiers work?

Adjusting modifiers, whether it be increasing or decreasing the maximum height or floor area ratio, or applying or removing the commercial frontage requirement, would require approval from City Council and follow the typical rezoning process. In practice, a Zone Modifier will be identified on the zoning map, as shown in the image below.

