NET RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

REDEVELOPING & DEVELOPING AREAS

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

URBAN GROWTH | PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT SERVICES | URBAN PLANNING & ECONOMY

Net residential density refers to the concentration of dwellings within a specified area. This report studies total net residential density at various geographies between 2005 and 2024. Total net residential density is the primary unit of measure; it is calculated by dividing the total number of dwelling units in a specified area by the net residential land area that has been developed.[1,2] Changes in this number over time provide an understanding of how the density of an area has changed. All references to density in this report refer to total net residential density.

GEOGRAPHY

This report provides an analysis of density for the following geographies:

- **Redeveloping Area:** The redeveloping area includes neighbourhoods that have undergone their initial development lifecycle. These neighbourhoods are generally within Anthony Henday Drive, although there are a number of neighbourhoods within Anthony Henday Drive that are part of the developing area.
- **Developing Area:** The developing area includes neighbourhoods that are still undergoing their initial development lifecycle. These neighbourhoods are generally located outside the Anthony Henday Drive. The Developing Area does not include the Future Growth Area (south of 41st Avenue SW).
- **Districts:** Districts are made up of collections of neighbourhoods that together provide a range of destinations, services and amenities and act as a gathering place (The City Plan, p.94). There are 15 districts in Edmonton.
- **Nodes and Corridors:** Nodes are centres of activity that feature a variety of housing types, gathering places, a mixture of land uses and varying tenures and affordability (The City Plan, p.98). Corridors are places for movement, living and commerce that are anchored by the mobility system and well connected to surrounding communities (The City Plan, p.98).
- **Priority Growth Areas (PGA):** PGAs are locations within the redeveloping area where the most dwelling unit growth is anticipated as the city grows to a population of 1.25 million (District Policy, p. 49). All PGAs are located within the redeveloping area.[3,4]

REDEVELOPING AREA

The the density of the redeveloping area was 32 dwelling units per net residential hectare (du/nrha) in 2024. This is a gradual increase from 30 du/nrha in 2005 (Figure 1).

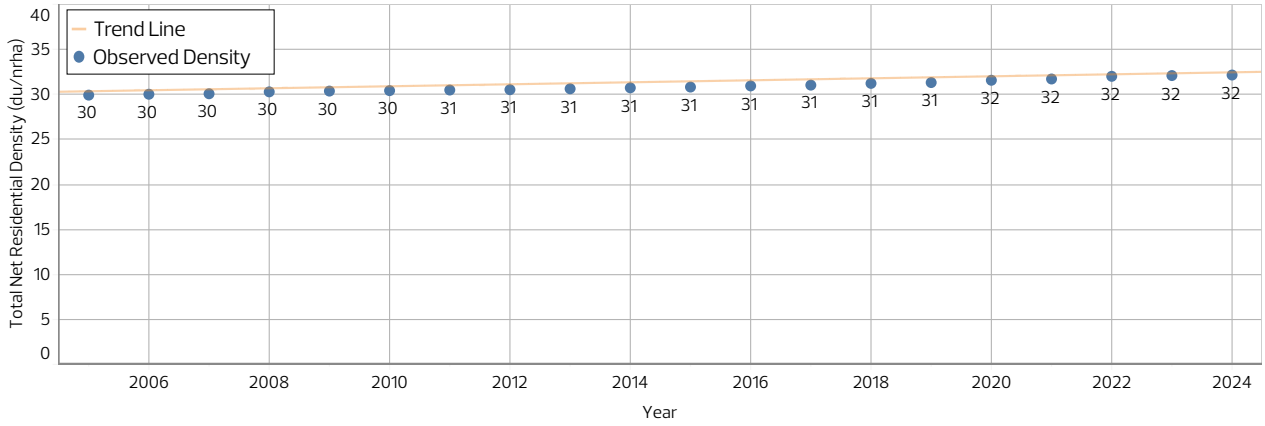


Figure 1. Total Net Residential Density, Redeveloping Area, 2005–2024 (du/nrha)

1 Net residential land area excludes rural residential parcels as well as parcels with non-residential land uses such as open spaces, road right-of-ways, commercial and institutional uses and undeveloped land.
2 All statistics provided in this report are approximations.
3 Multi-year analysis of the PGAs in this report are based on the PGA boundaries approved in District Plans in 2024.
4 As there are no PGAs in the developing area, PGA analysis in this report is only included in the redeveloping area section.

Districts with Redeveloping Area Neighbourhoods

The density of redeveloping area districts ranged between approximately 18 du/nrha and 83 du/nrha (Figure 2).[5,6,7] The Central District continues to be the densest district in the redeveloping area (and citywide) at 83 du/nrha followed by the Scona District (46 du/nrha, which is also second highest citywide) and the North Central District (35 du/nrha).

When comparing density changes between 2005 to 2024, districts with historically higher residential growth rates (such as Central and Scona) show a significantly greater density change compared to other redeveloping area districts. The Central District has densified the most over a 20-year period, increasing by 7 du/nrha. This was followed by the Scona District, increasing by 3 du/nrha. In contrast, the density of some districts (such as West Edmonton) have remained the mostly stable, showing virtually no change over this period. There have been no notable decreases in the density of any districts.

Redeveloping Area Nodes and Corridors

The nodes and corridors in the redeveloping area are some of the densest areas in Edmonton (Appendix 1, Figure A). The density of nodes and corridors as a whole in 2024 is 79 du/nrha, which is more than double the overall density of the redeveloping area. The density of individual nodes and corridors in the redeveloping area ranged between 19 du/nrha and 247 du/nrha. The Centre City Node in the Central District continues to be the densest node or corridor (247 du/nrha) followed by Bonnie Doon District Node in the Southeast District (181 du/nrha) and then University-Garneau Major Node in Scona District (171 du/nrha). Of all the redeveloping area nodes and corridors, 142 Street Secondary Corridor has the lowest density (18 du/nrha) in 2024.

When comparing density changes between 2005 to 2024, the Bonnie Doon District Node has densified the most, increasing by 61 du/nrha in that time period. (Appendix 2). In contrast, several nodes and corridors have remained stable (e.g. Westmount and Londonderry district nodes).

Priority Growth Areas (PGAs)

PGAs are located within select nodes and corridors. As of 2024, the density of the PGAs as a whole is 123 du/nrha. When considering the PGAs as individual areas, the density ranged between approximately 42 du/nrha and 401 du/nrha. As of 2024, the top three densest PGAs were within the Centre City Node: Centre City – Downtown PGA (401 du/nrha), Centre City – Wîhkwêntôwin PGA (261 du/nrha) and Centre City – Quarters PGA (251 du/nrha).

When comparing density changes between 2005 to 2024, most PGAs showed notable increases in density. The Bonnie Doon and Centre City – Downtown PGAs have densified the most, increasing by 61 du/nrha and 45 du/nrha, respectively. A few PGAs showed moderate or stable density increases (e.g. Blatchford – NAIT – Kingsway and Centre City – Rossdale PGAs). Refer to Figure 3 for the density of each PGA between 2005 and 2024.

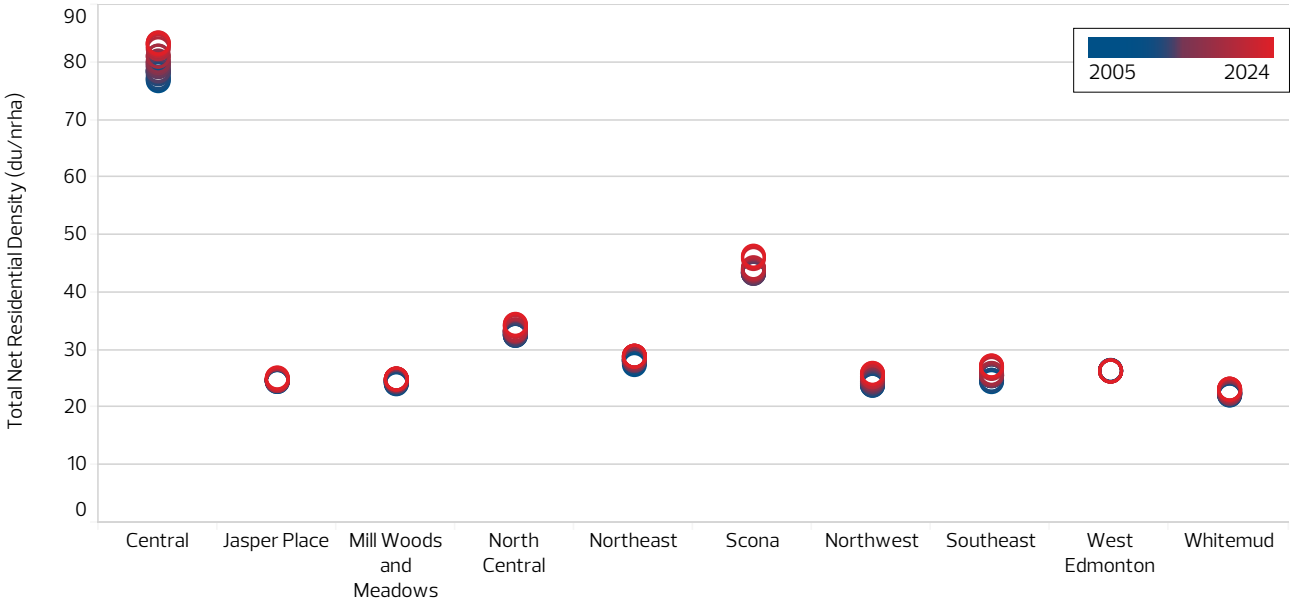


Figure 2. Total Net Residential Density in Redeveloping Area by District, 2005–2024 (du/nrha)

5 The development pattern areas are defined at the neighbourhood scale. This section includes all districts that include redeveloping area neighbourhoods. For districts that include both redeveloping and developing neighbourhoods (e.g. Northwest District), only neighbourhoods within the redeveloping area have been included in this analysis.

6 The range limits exclude the Evergreen, Maple Ridge, and Westview Village neighbourhoods as majority of the dwelling units in those neighbourhoods are mobile homes.

7 Districts that had over 80 per cent of net residential land area in the developing area were excluded from Figure 2.

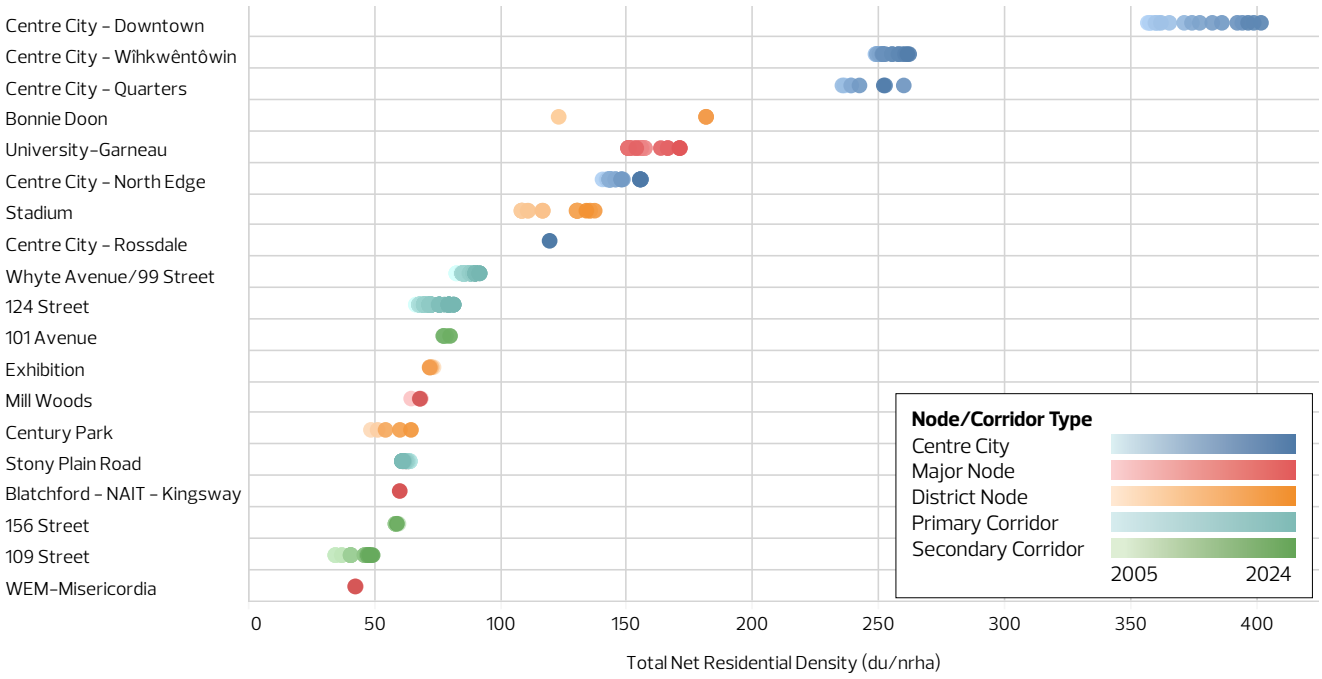
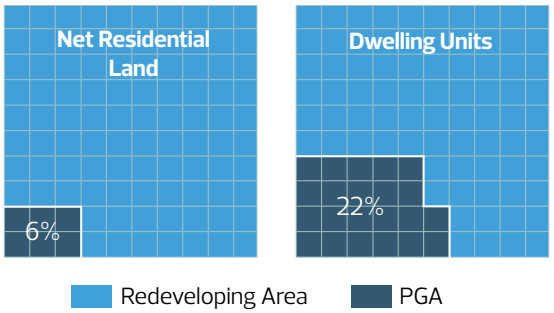


Figure 3. Total Net Residential Density by Priority Growth Area, 2005–2024 (du/nrha)

Density in PGAs can be variable, as a result of their relatively small area. The construction of medium and high residential density developments has a significantly greater impact on the density of individual PGAs compared to other geographies, as do demolitions that precede redevelopment. A decrease in density has been observed in the Stony Plain Road and Exhibition PGAs between 2005 and 2024, although significant redevelopment is anticipated in both areas.

Did you know...

PGAs comprise only about 6 per cent of the redeveloping area's net residential land, but have 22 per cent of the total dwelling units.



DEVELOPING AREA

As of 2024, the density of the developing area is 31 du/nrha, a 35 per cent increase from approximately 23 du/nrha in 2005 (Figure 1).

The density of the developing area is impacted by the development stage of individual neighbourhoods. New neighbourhoods tend to have lower densities because single detached homes are typically developed first, followed by medium and high density residential developments. With The City Plan's inclusion of the 45 du/nrha density standard that was previously set in the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Board's Regional Growth Plan, density of the developing area could continue to increase over time.

Districts with Developing Area Neighbourhoods

A comparison of the current densities of the developing area districts show their density is more uniformly distributed than the redeveloping area (Appendix 1).[9] This is because there is less variation in the housing types in the developing area compared to the redeveloping area. The density of developing area districts ranged between approximately 11 du/nrha and 40 du/nrha. The Mill Woods and Meadows District is the densest district in the developing area at 38 du/nrha followed by the Southwest District (33 du/nrha) and the Ellerslie District (32 du/nrha) (Figure 5).[10]

9 The development pattern areas are defined at the neighbourhood scale. This section includes all districts that include developing area neighbourhoods. For districts that include both redeveloping and developing neighbourhoods (e.g. Northwest District), only neighbourhoods within the developing area have been included in this analysis.

10 As indicated in the previous footnote, density analysis for Mill Woods and Meadows District in this section is based solely on the 17 per cent of the District's net residential land that is within the developing area.

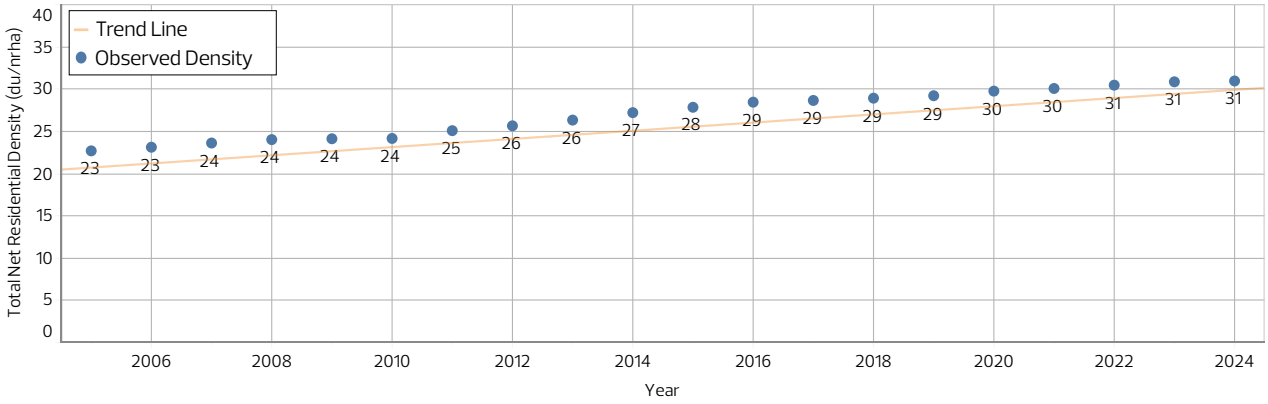


Figure 4. Total Net Residential Density, Developing Area, 2005–2024 (du/nrha)

All districts with developing area neighbourhoods have had observable increases in density between 2005 and 2024. The Mill Woods and Meadows District and Ellerslie District have densified the most, increasing by 16 du/nrha and 9 du/nrha, respectively. The Northwest and West Edmonton districts have shown the smallest density increase, increasing by 3 du/nrha and 2 du/nrha respectively.

The increasing density of the developing area can largely be attributed to newer areas being developed with smaller parcel sizes for low density development (2023 Net Residential Density Report). Additional increases in density may occur in the future as medium and high density developments follow low density development.

Developing Area Nodes and Corridors

The density of the developing area nodes and corridors as a whole is 62 du/nrha, nearly twice the overall density of the developing area. The density of individual nodes and corridors ranged between approximately 2 du/nrha and 133 du/nrha. The Charlesworth District Node in the Ellerslie District is the densest node or corridor (133 du/nrha) in the developing area followed by the Meadows North District Node in the Mill Woods and Meadows District (128 du/nrha) and then the Heritage Valley Major Node in the Southwest District (127 du/nrha).

When comparing density changes between 2005 to 2024, the developing area nodes and corridors show notable variation in growth trends. The Windermere Centre and Meadows North district nodes have densified the most, increasing by 65 du/nrha and 30 du/nrha, respectively. In contrast, some nodes and corridors showed moderate or stable density increases (e.g. Charlesworth District Node, 137 Ave Primary Corridor) while others experienced a notable reduction in density (e.g. Claireview Major Node, Riverview Centre District Node). Lower density dwellings are often built first in the developing area, followed by higher density development; this leads to a gradual increase in density over time. However, in some cases higher density developments are followed by lower density developments, which leads to a decrease in the density of the area. Refer to Appendix 2 for the density of each node and corridor between 2005 and 2024.

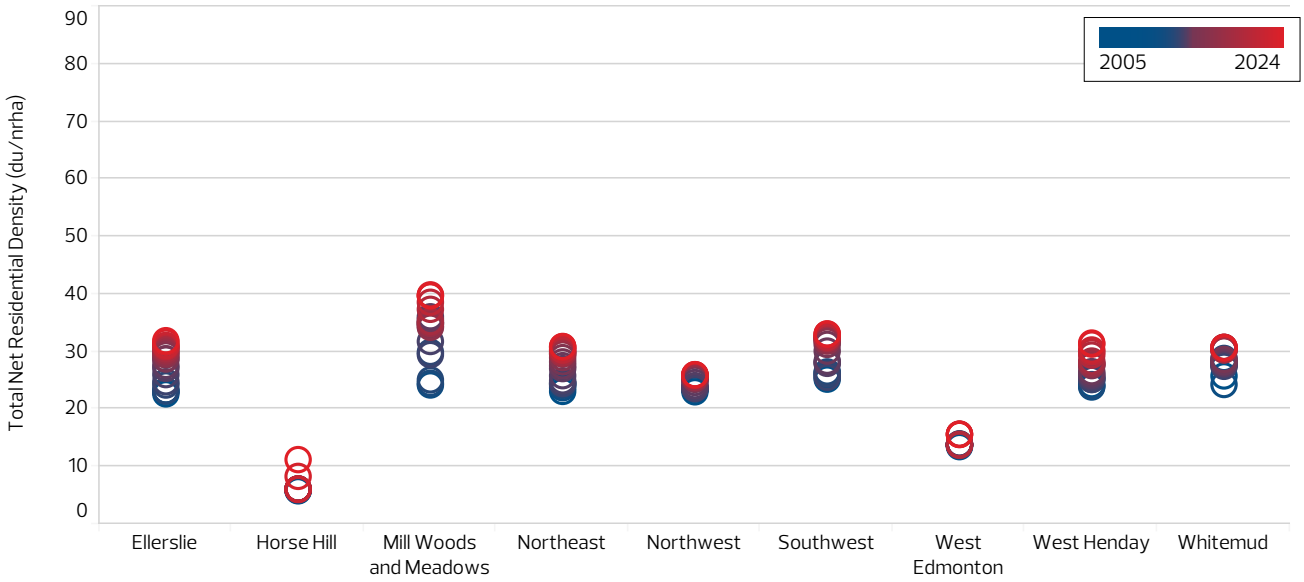


Figure 5. Total Net Residential Density in Dedeveloping Area by District, 2005–2024 (du/nrha)

DATA NOTES

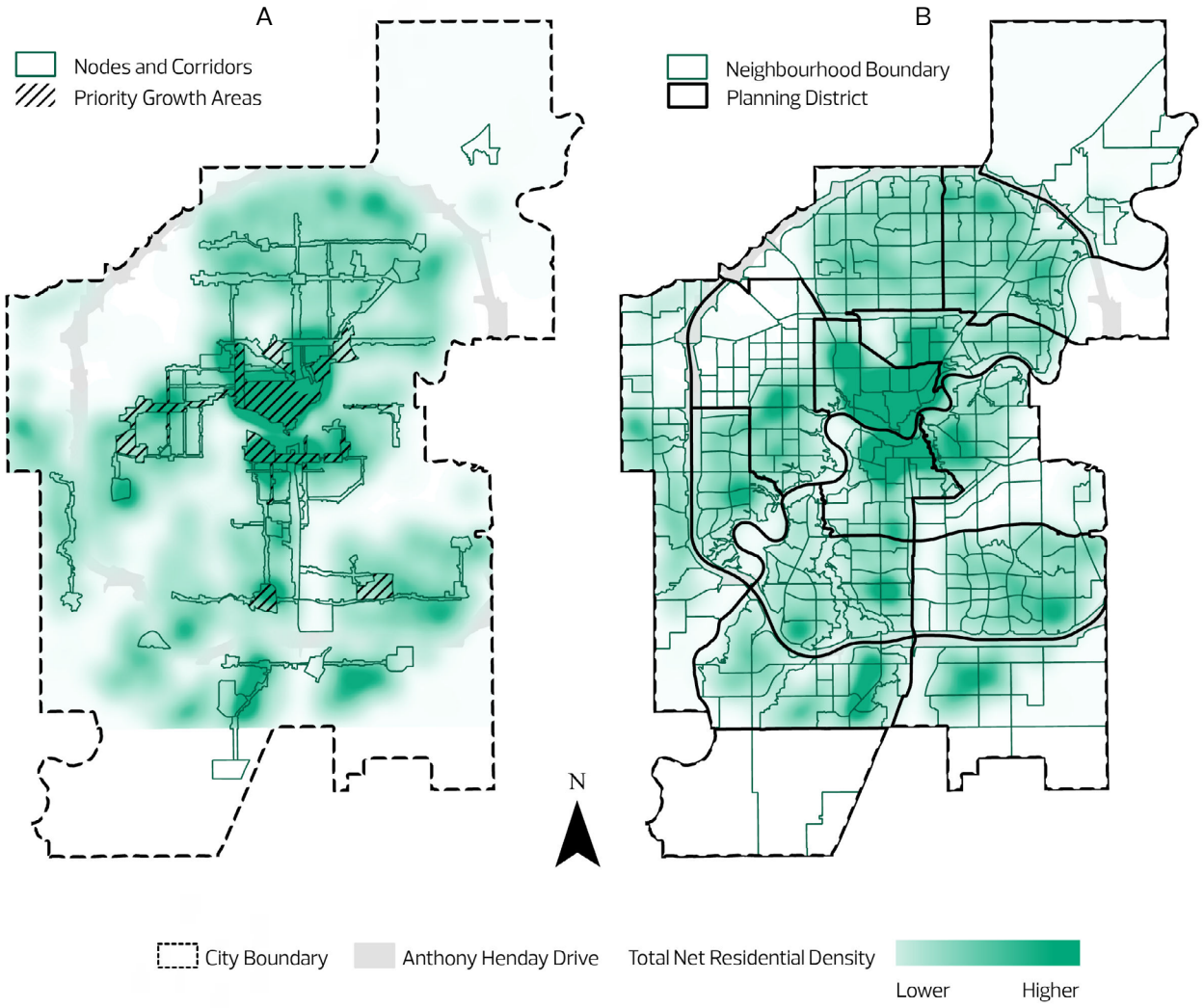
Reported densities are rounded to the nearest whole number. However, sometimes the difference in density between areas is less than one du/nrha. Therefore, while these figures provide a reliable overview, they should be treated as approximations.

The analysis in this report only considers single detached, semi-detached, row house, and apartment dwelling units. Due to the data structure, dwelling units are analyzed based on the year of construction of the primary dwelling.[11] This means that secondary suites and backyard houses that are added to existing parcels, as well as net new apartment units resulting from renovations, are recorded against the original year of construction of the primary dwelling, and not the year the new unit was added.

The 2023 report included data on the average annual new-build net residential density, by dividing the total number of new dwelling units on a newly developed parcel by the area of the parcel. Tracking changes in the annual average for all newly developed parcels over time allows changes in the net residential density of newly developed parcels to be observed. However, this type of analysis is not included in the 2024 report because the data structure of the data sources used in this report did not support this type of analysis.

11 Information regarding dwelling unit counts and built year, lot size and land use type are taken from City datasets (land use, property information and civic addressing). Planned density statistics are sourced from up-to-date Neighbourhood Structure Plans (NSPs) and Neighbourhood Area Structure Plans (NASPs), and select Area Structure Plans (ASPs).

APPENDIX 1. TOTAL NET RESIDENTIAL DENSITY IN NODES AND CORRIDORS, PRIORITY GROWTH AREAS, (MAP A) AND DISTRICTS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS (MAP B), 2024



APPENDIX 2. TOTAL NET RESIDENTIAL DENSITY OF NODES AND CORRIDORS, 2005–2024 (DU/NRHA)