

## CHARTER BYLAW 19909

### Text amendment to Zoning Bylaw 12800 to revise the RA7 and RA8 Zones

#### Purpose

To amend Zoning Bylaw 12800 to revise the RA7 and RA8 Zones to improve the building interface with abutting properties.

#### Readings

Charter Bylaw 19909 is ready for three readings after the public hearing has been held. If Council wishes to give three readings during a single meeting, Council must unanimously agree “That Charter Bylaw 19909 be considered for third reading.”

#### Advertising and Signing

This Charter Bylaw was advertised in the Edmonton Journal on November 19 and November 27, 2021. The Charter Bylaw can be passed following third reading.

#### Position of Administration

Administration supports this proposed Charter Bylaw.

#### Report

In August 2019, City Council approved changes to the Zoning Bylaw to create additional opportunities for medium scale residential development, also known as missing middle housing. These amendments were intended to remove the barriers to development, simplify regulations and allow greater flexibility for developing under standard zoning, including the RA7 and RA8 Zones. The revisions were comprehensive, and included reducing setbacks, removing the minimum lot size, removing the maximum density and increasing the maximum floor area ratio (FAR).

As part of standard practice, Administration has reviewed the use of RA7 and RA8 since the 2019 amendments. It has been identified that in locations where the RA7 and RA8 zones are next to existing single detached housing, the interface between buildings can be abrupt with minimal transition. This is especially prevalent in some areas of the city that are just beginning to see increased development intensity, especially with the identification of new key nodes and corridors by the City Plan.

A number of applications to rezone to the RA7 and RA8 Zones within low density neighbourhoods adjacent to single detached housing, in or along key nodes or corridors, have received negative reception from the community and pose challenges for a sensitive transition. Rezoning applications have been referred back by Council at Public Hearings for further engagement due to concerns over massing, narrow side setbacks and sensitivity to context. While the City Plan indicates that areas

## CHARTER BYLAW 19909

within key nodes and corridors should increase in density, there is balance that needs to be achieved when placing medium scale buildings next to small scale development to ensure a sensitive and compatible transition from the existing to the new. As such, this Charter Bylaw proposes to revise the RA7 and RA8 Zones by increasing the side setbacks in certain instances in order to reduce the impact on existing residents, while finding a balance that still allows for efficient development and increased density.

The RA7 and RA8 Zones continue to be reviewed holistically under the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative. Through consultation with stakeholders, the new Zoning Bylaw may include a suite of design approaches, beyond setbacks, to help improve the transition between medium scale and small scale buildings. As such, the proposed revisions in this Charter Bylaw are limited in scope and address only interior side setbacks.

### Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendments and Rationale

The proposed amendments are intended to improve the interface between buildings allowed in the RA7 and RA8 Zones and the abutting properties. In general, the amendments to both zones would allow smaller buildings to have smaller setbacks and taller buildings to have larger setbacks. The proposed amendments would remove the stepback component from the RA7 Zone, and increase the height of the stepback in the RA8 Zone (to above four storeys) when abutting small scale residential only. This reduces the massing and creates architectural interest while allowing a larger building pocket for the lower storeys.

Attachment 3 provides 3D and sun shadow models for different development scenarios under the proposed regulations.

#### Amendments to RA7

- Increase the interior side setback from 1.2 m to 1.5 m for buildings less than 10.0 m in height.  
*Rationale:*
  - Facilitates small lot development by allowing shorter buildings to still have a small setback while a slight increase allows for 0.6 m projections and leaves room for a 0.9 m pathway.
- Increase the side setback to 3.0 m when the building is taller than 10.0 m.  
*Rationale:*
  - Increasing the setback for taller buildings helps manage building transitions and reduces the overall massing and impact of the building, while allowing for increased landscaping viability within the setback.
- Remove the stepback above 10 m.  
*Rationale:*
  - Feedback has been received from the development industry that it is generally not practical to build a stepback on buildings of this scale due to additional cost and required engineering. Under the current regulations, it is more common to build the side setback at the minimum stepback dimension for the entire height (i.e. 3.0 m setback, instead of 1.2 m setback with a stepback to 3.0 m total).
  - The current effect of the stepback (reduced massing) is captured through revised setbacks.

# CHARTER BYLAW 19909

## Amendments to RA8

- Increase the interior side setback from 1.2 m to 1.5 m.  
*Rationale:*
  - Facilitates small lot development by allowing shorter buildings to still have a small setback while a slight increase allows for 0.6 m projections and leaves room for a 0.9 m pathway.
  
- Increase the side setback to 3.0 m when the building is taller than 10.0 m.  
*Rationale:*
  - Increasing the setback for taller buildings helps manage building transitions by reducing the impact of the overall building massing, and allowing for increased landscaping viability within the setback.
  
- Increase the height and width of the stepback to 3.0 m above 14.5 m when abutting a site zoned to allow single detached housing only (this also allows the option to provide a 6.0 m setback for the full height).  
*Rationale:*
  - Balances the additional development costs of a stepback by increasing the building pocket for lower storeys.
  - Removes the stepback in all locations other than beside single detached housing.
  - Provides flexibility in application with the option to provide a 6.0 m side setback for the full height.
  - Reduces the overall and perceived massing of the building by breaking up the facade.
  - Reduces the possible sun shadowing impact on neighbouring property owners.
  - Allows for a greater variety of tree species and landscape buffering options.

## Implementation

In order to allow the industry to adjust to these revisions, the proposed amendments would not come into effect until February 1, 2022.

## Community Insights

Administration held conversations with stakeholder organizations, including Infill Development in Edmonton Association, Canadian Home Builders Association, Urban Development Institute and the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues Planning Committee. Through discussions, and responses, the proposed amendments were revised to address as much of the feedback as possible while maintaining the tight scope of the project.

Additional feedback not incorporated at this time has been included as part of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal consultation work. For details see Attachment 4 What We Heard and What We Changed.

## Attachments

1. Charter Bylaw 19909
2. Mark-up of Proposed Text Amendment to the RA7 and RA8 Zones
3. 3D Modelling and Sun Shadow Comparison by Development Scenario
4. What We Heard and What We Changed