

## INFILL ROADMAP INITIATIVE - 2022 UPDATE

### RECOMMENDATION

That the April 26, 2022, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE00854, be received for information.

#### Report Purpose

##### Information only.

Urban Planning Committee is being informed how the *Infill Roadmap 2018* was completed and how the remaining work integrates into other ongoing projects and initiatives.

### Executive Summary

- The previous municipal development plan set a strategic goal for increased infill development, which was pursued in part by two infill roadmap action plans.
- The Infill Roadmap 2018 has now concluded its scope of work.
- In 2021, Administration completed work on three more of the 25 actions of the roadmap.
- Twenty-two of the actions are now complete and three are part of the scope of work of current City Plan implementation projects.
- The Infill Roadmap has been a success at welcoming more people and new homes into Edmonton's older neighbourhoods, and has set the stage for the more ambitious strategic goals of The City Plan.
- Administration continues to listen, learn, lead and adjust our practices to create enabling conditions for successful infill projects. This is important as we continue to welcome more Edmontonians in established neighborhoods and work to meet infill and related targets of The City Plan.

### REPORT

The Infill Roadmap 2018 is the City of Edmonton's work plan to support more and better infill development. It was created through the Evolving Infill 2.0 project to follow up on the first infill roadmap and shift the focus to denser types of infill termed the "missing middle".

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The Roadmap contains 25 actions. Twenty-two of these projects have been completed, including three that represent ongoing commitments to affordable housing and service delivery. The remaining three actions will be completed through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative and the City Planning Framework project.

When the Infill Roadmap 2018 was prepared, *The Way We Grow* was Edmonton's municipal development plan that guided all land use planning. That plan set the target of 25 per cent of new homes in the city to be infill units. After extensive efforts, this target was achieved in the last three years of that plan's life.

The City Plan has set a long term goal of 50 per cent of new homes to be infill units as we grow to a population of two million. Achieving this goal will require building upon the successes of the Infill Roadmap, and developing additional supporting tools and strategies to implement The City Plan. District Planning, the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative, and the Growth Management Framework projects in particular will support the City's infill goals going forward. These projects all apply a more comprehensive equity lens than was articulated in the previous *The Way We Grow* and Infill Roadmap 2018 plans.

This report acts as a capstone for the Infill Roadmap, highlighting key achievements over the past year and summarizing the results of each action (in Attachment 1). The Infill Roadmap 2018 is intended to be the final infill roadmap. Implementation projects of The City Plan and other work will continue to improve on the work completed so far and address new opportunities and challenges as they arise.

### 2021 Completed Actions

Three of the 25 Roadmap actions were completed in the past year and one previously completed action was launched publicly. These are:

- Action 2 - Review infrastructure capacity in Edmonton's older neighborhoods and identify the infrastructure investments needed to support infill.
- Action 11 - Create a publicly available map of optimal infill development locations for medium, high scale and mixed use developments based on best evidence and neighbourhood level indicators
- Action 12 - Reduce barriers to the use of Low Impact Development (LID) practices for low and medium scale infill.
- Action 17 - Investigate new processes and mechanisms to improve lot grading in infill situations.

#### Action 2 - Infrastructure capacity review

This action drew upon the work done for The City Plan to identify priority nodes and corridors within older neighbourhoods and outline how they might redevelop as the city grows to two million residents. Administration collaborated with experts in transportation and utilities to determine the current state of infrastructure in these locations, and then to determine how servicing and road rights of way will need to evolve as the city grows in accordance with The City Plan, including high level costs for these upgrades.

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This work supports long range planning for infrastructure renewal and upgrades for the redeveloping area, to enable 50 per cent of the city's residential growth to a population of two million to be accommodated through infill. Understanding of the scope and costs of infrastructure in some locations will inform further planning and prioritization of City-initiated infrastructure investment, incentives and other programs to implement the direction of The City Plan. This is part of the work of the Growth Management project currently underway.

Administration held a stakeholder information session and received valuable feedback on infrastructure capacity for infill development. A What We Heard report (Attachment 2) highlights and addresses the questions, comments and concerns expressed by industry and community stakeholders.

### Action 11 - Create optimal infill map

This action was reported as complete in the 2021 update, but its launch was delayed for technical reasons. The tool has since been improved and was published on the City's website as the Infill Data Explorer on December 13, 2021. It combines available open data with written content to provide Edmontonians with an improved source of information on residential infill development. The data selected was based on feedback collected from industry and community members. It can be used by builders and homebuyers to explore potential sites for redevelopment, and community organizations to better understand trends in their neighbourhood.

### Action 12 - Reduce barriers to use of Low Impact Development

Low impact development is a land development and stormwater management approach that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to the source as possible. Examples include rain gardens, green roofs and rainwater harvesting for reuse.

This action relied on extensive discussions with stakeholders to understand the challenges facing projects seeking to include low impact development features. While not all of these challenges can be solved by the City, some City regulations were originally not supportive. In early 2021, Council approved changes to the Drainage Bylaw (18093) to create new opportunities for low impact development. Later that year, Administration worked with EPCOR to create standardized designs and processes for threeplex and fourplex infill developments. These will provide additional clarity and certainty for people who wish to build low impact development features on their property.

### Action 17 - Improve lot grading

Modern lot grading regulations were not in place when mature areas of the city were built, so some new homes have inadvertently created drainage issues for neighbouring properties. As part of this action, Administration oversaw a review of lot grading processes in Edmonton, drawing upon the experience of other cities with similar issues. This review has proposed changes that Administration will incorporate into our work processes to address challenges that are unique to infill development. These changes support Administration's efforts to streamline processes and reduce delays for applicants while protecting neighbouring properties. The proposed changes will be integrated into the subdivision and development permitting processes that Administration uses to provide oversight for lot grading.

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## Other Completed Actions

Another three actions are deemed complete based on their progress over the course of the roadmap. However, these three actions are part of broader commitments to ongoing issues that will continue beyond the life of the roadmap. These are:

- Action 6 - Develop tools to improve housing affordability in all neighbourhoods.
- Action 13 - Monitor and make the necessary improvements to regulate how the City addresses emerging issues related to infill construction.
- Action 14 - Improve the consistency and timelines for the infill development permitting process.

The work completed on each of these actions is described in Attachment 1.

## Remaining Actions

Three actions of the roadmap are still underway and will be completed through existing projects:

- Action 15 - Develop a process to review and update or retire plans and policies that are not aligned with current policy and regulations (City Planning Framework).
- Action 19 - Simplify the low scale residential zones for existing neighbourhoods (Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative).
- Action 25 - Integrate urban design regulations into the Zoning Bylaw through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal project (Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative).

## Outcomes of Infill Roadmap 2018 and Future Infill Work

The roadmap identifies six project outcomes:

1. Infill development responds to context and addresses emerging needs.
2. The costs of doing infill development are reduced.
3. We have a diverse mix of housing options that support social and community inclusion in our neighbourhoods.
4. Laneway housing opportunities are expanded.
5. City infrastructure investment is aligned with infill development.
6. Everyone involved is clear about the development process and what to expect.

Each of these has been achieved to some degree through the efforts of the past four years. City regulations allow more opportunities to provide homes of all kinds to meet the needs of diverse households, deliver programs that reduce costs and improve timelines, and take a relationship-based approach with Administration, industry and communities to understand infill issues.

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Outcome 5 - City infrastructure investment is aligned with infill development - requires additional work. This work is underway through the Growth Management Framework to determine how to strategically support infill through infrastructure investments and other financial tools.

The conclusion of the Infill Roadmap offers Edmonton the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the past four years. While these improvements have been meaningful, there is still a need to make further changes in order to achieve the goals set by The City Plan. As work to implement The City Plan advances, new opportunities to support infill development will be identified and implemented based on priorities and budgets.

## **COMMUNITY INSIGHT**

The Evolving Infill project that produced the Infill Roadmap was the product of extensive public engagement that spanned 20 months. Between 2016 and 2018, approximately 3,300 Edmontonians provided feedback at one of the in-person events or through two online surveys. Administration used engagement results to guide work on the Roadmap and continues to engage stakeholders to advance specific actions. Administration is using website improvements, social media, newsletters and annual reporting to Urban Planning Committee (including in 2020 and 2021) to report back and be accountable to Edmontonians. As infill work continues, the City of Edmonton will continue to listen, learn and lead from the perspective of diverse Edmontonians, the builder community and best practices learned from other stakeholders and municipalities.

## **GBA+**

The development of the Evolving Infill roadmap included specific measures to address equity, including engagement events focused on learning perspectives from immigrant communities, children and youth. These served to broaden the group of participants and voices influencing the direction of the infill roadmap.

Many of the actions included in the roadmap were selected to address equity concerns that stakeholders had shared with Administration. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Action 3 - Investigate opportunities for tiny homes
- Action 4 - Re-examine collective housing regulations
- Action 6 - Improve housing affordability
- Action 9 - Better inform residents
- Action 10 - Incentivize accessible laneway homes

The City Plan implementation projects are taking additional steps to incorporate GBA+ into their scope to ensure future planning work contributes to a more equitable city. These steps will be reported on within their respective council reports.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Infill Roadmap Implementation Summary
2. Infill Roadmap: Action 2 Infrastructure Capacity Review - Stakeholder Open House