

Summary of Public Consultation

As part of the information gathering stage, Administration reached out to stakeholders in a variety of ways:

- In-person and phone interviews with 13 individuals who reached out to the project team or were identified as repeat applicants for garage or garden suites.
- A meeting with Infill Development in Edmonton Association on March 1, 2016, with five representatives in attendance.
- A public meeting with Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues on March 14, 2016, with 15 representatives in attendance.
- A meeting with Urban Development Institute - Edmonton Region and Canadian Home Builders Association - Edmonton Region on March 16, 2016, with 18 representatives in attendance.
- A survey sent out on March 8, 2016, to 32 people who had built, designed, or applied for a development permit for a garage or garden suite.
- A meeting of the Community Infill Panel on May 11, 2016, with eight representatives in attendance.
- An open house to discuss proposed approaches to amendments on June 8, 2016, with 21 individuals in attendance.
- A questionnaire sent on June 14, 2016, to 175 households located adjacent to, or across a lane from, an approved garage or garden suite.
- Circulation of the draft report and amendments to stakeholders from June 28, 2016, to July 25, 2016.

Feedback provided is summarized below. At the request of community members, feedback from community stakeholders has generally been summarized separately from development industry feedback, except for the June 8 open house and Community Infill Panel meeting which included feedback from both community and development industry stakeholders.

Community feedback

This section includes feedback from the March 14 meeting, in person interviews, and notes Administration received from the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues Planning and Development Committee's February 24 meeting.

Design & Articulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garage and garden suites should reflect existing styles in the neighbourhood • Articulation is important and should be required • Sheer walls create perception of greater height
Roof Pitch & Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear why height is linked to the existing height of the main

	<p>house as it may be redeveloped in the future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations should be flexible to allow for more livable spaces • Increased height for flat roofs needs to be balanced with stepback requirements to avoid massing impact of large wall
Use Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garage and garden suites should be a discretionary use to ensure flexible items can be identified
Floor Area Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing staircases from floor area calculations would facilitate development and create safer and more livable units
Site Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing more site coverage would provide flexibility for better design • If the main house is under the site coverage allowance, the difference should be allowed to go to the garage/garden suite • More opportunities for at-grade living spaces preferable even if lot coverage increases
Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate separation space should be provided between the main house and the garage or garden suite
Construction Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility servicing is expensive
Application Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application process is lengthy and has uncertain outcomes
Uncertainty for Neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbours do not know how the final building will look and what quality it will be. This leads to appeals • Greater communication with neighbours is encouraged
Shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar access for neighbours should not be compromised
Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows from garage suites do not necessarily create less privacy for adjacent yards than back windows of existing houses • Privacy is important for adjacent properties • Neighbours should be notified of window locations and work with applicant to determine appropriate window placement rather than having rigid requirements • Restricting windows to facing the laneway only creates poor views for residents of the garage or garden suite
Laneway Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for laneways to become secondary streets • Heavy vehicle traffic, lighting and mail delivery need to be considered

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access for safety vehicles
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring three spaces reduces design quality, leads to over-developed lots and encourages large three car garages • Space could be better used for amenity area or at-grade living space • Residents park in the street instead of their parking space, which could be addressed through parking permits • Parking maximums may be appropriate in some neighbourhoods • Parking reductions could be linked to proximity to transit • Parking requirements should not be reduced
Landscaping & Amenity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaping and amenity area should be required • Lot grading should not impact adjacent properties • Existing trees should be maintained where possible and could be incentivized by allowing variances • Greenery or green walls could help reduce appearance of massing
Community Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community consultation with neighbours is important • Consultation can slow down the process and create uncertainty • Suites should only be located where they are truly wanted by the community • The Subdivision and Development Appeal Board should be more sensitive to community wishes at hearings
Education & Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more educational materials to explain regulations and the development process to both applicants and neighbours
Variances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large suites are being approved with variances • Erodes support for this housing form • Variances should be limited

Development industry and applicant feedback

This section includes feedback from March 1 and March 16 meetings, in person and phone interviews, and the March 8 survey.

Design & Articulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design can be subjective and neighbourhood character difficult to identify • Unclear why garage and garden suites should be held to a
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	<p>higher design standard than houses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigid design regulations can decrease innovation and quality • Second storey setbacks can increase cost and reduce livable area • Dictating finishes can reduce affordability • Only street or lane facing facades should require articulation • Lists of articulation options can provide needed flexibility
Roof Pitch & Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current height restrictions for both flat and pitched roof dwellings create a barrier to building garage and garden suites • Unclear why there are different height limits for garage and garden suites • Unclear why height is linked to the existing height of the main house as it may be redeveloped in the future • Sloped roofs lead to less usable space in the dwelling • Regulations should be flexible to allow for more livable spaces • Unclear why grade is calculated using the four corners of the site
Use Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear why there are separate definitions for garage and garden suites • Definitions reduce flexibility and lead to less innovative designs • Unclear why it is discretionary if there are no location criteria • Should be a permitted use • Should be discretionary in some neighbourhoods but not others
Floor Area Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Method of calculating floor area means higher insulation is penalized and stairwells often located outdoors • Removing staircases, storage, and balconies from floor area calculations would facilitate development and create safer and more livable units • Floor area should only be restricted at the second storey
Site Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing more site coverage would provide flexibility for better design • If the main house is under the site coverage allowance, the difference should be allowed to go to the garage/garden suite • Remove site coverage restrictions all together • More opportunities for at-grade living spaces preferable even if lot coverage increases

Lot Sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater flexibility for lot sizes should be provided as many lots do not meet the minimum requirements • There is a strong demand for garage suites in new neighbourhoods but site size regulations restrict this from happening
Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suites should be allowed to locate closer to the main house if desired • Required side setbacks on corner lots reduce usable space
Construction Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinklers for mid-block units creates a challenge • Fire rating is expensive
Enforcement of Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some stakeholders expressed the need for there to be better enforcement of regulations • Other stakeholders highlighted the need for greater flexibility in regulations
Application Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much information is required for the development permit • The application process is lengthy and has uncertain outcomes • Different interpretation of regulations leads to unpredictable results, making it more challenging to take on a project • The discretionary nature and frequent need for variances increases the lack of certainty at the appeal stage
Uncertainty for Neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information, such as coloured elevation drawings, should be provided • Pre-approved designs could be fast-tracked through the system
Shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow impacts are minimal • Year-round solar access must be considered
Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full privacy is not a realistic expectation in an urban area and windows from garage suites do not necessarily create less privacy for adjacent yards than back windows of existing houses. • Privacy regulations should be related to angle and distance
Laneway Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes on the street improve laneway and neighbourhood safety
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring three spaces reduces design quality, leads to over-developed lots and encourages large three car garages • Parking requirements prevent garage suites from locating in

	new neighbourhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space could be better used for amenity area or at-grade living space • Provide more flexibility in parking requirements • Parking reductions could be linked to proximity to transit
Landscaping & Amenity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green roofs should be allowed
Education & Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more educational materials to explain regulations and the development process to both applicants and neighbours • Share examples of good quality design

Community Infill Panel meeting

Panel members had the opportunity to provide their feedback on Garage and Garden suites at their regularly scheduled meeting held on May 11, 2016.

Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's difficult to provide three parking spaces on site • The resident of a garage suite will typically have one car that could be parked on the street, especially on a corner site • Requirements could be reduced based on access to transit • Certain neighbourhoods are better suited to reductions in parking requirements than others • Could impose parking maximums in some neighbourhoods • People will make different transportation decisions if it is more difficult to park • The car should not dominate planning • If an owner feels they can rent out the suite without providing additional parking, then the extra space shouldn't be needed
Size of the Garage Suite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 m² is a very small space to provide a 2 bedroom suite; it is unlivable • Would be nice to incorporate some floor area at grade; could be allowed to expand into the garage area • Stairs should be excluded from the calculation of floor area to encourage their development inside the building; this will also allow storage area under stairs • When the maximum size upstairs is smaller, it leads to awkward design • Maximum size could be increased as long as there is proper drainage

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum size could be a percentage of site area • Maximum size could be based on the capacity of the principal dwelling
Discretionary Use Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not be discretionary if all regulations are met • Status as a discretionary use leads to unpredictability • Homeowners spend a lot of money on applications without certainty as to whether they will be approved or not • Predictability is important • The regulations are restrictive enough that it does not need to be a discretionary use • Notifying and consulting with too many neighbours raises anxiety • Educational materials like Vancouver's would encourage people to design the suite well
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some yard or yard-feeling space could be required • Landscaping could be used as a site coverage or parking bonus • Balcony could be allowed anywhere if screening is required

Multi-stakeholder event

A drop-in open house was held for all stakeholders on June 8, 2016, where attendees had the opportunity to comment on the proposed direction of amendments.

Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In favour of increase for flat roof garage suites • Increase in maximum height is definitely needed • In favour of increase in height and removal of the link to the principal dwelling. • Linking the two heights prevents phased redevelopment of the site • Height should be reduced in order to reduce massing and shadow impacts • The link to the principal dwelling helps the garage suite fit in better with existing context
Articulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjectivity in regulating design can be an issue • Articulation should be required to provide character • Articulation reduces massing impact and reduces the appearance of height • A difference between the first and second storeys should be sufficient • Articulation can take the form of protruding features,

	<p>stepbacks, a variety of materials, windows and trim, cantilevers, rooflines, and balconies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation will differ with personal taste • In favor of a “menu” of architectural options
Discretionary Use & Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with adjacent neighbours is important and should be required as part of the application process • Windows, drainage, and amenity space should be shown on plans so concerns can be addressed • A neighbour sign-off form with key discussion points could be implemented • Nothing should be left to the discretion of the development Officer • Garage suites should remain discretionary on interior lots but be permitted on corner lots • Garage suites should remain discretionary to improve communication and accountability of builders, and improve public trust • Garage suites should be allowed everywhere and the rules should be the same for all neighbourhoods • There are no circumstances under which garage suites should be discretionary • People sometimes appeal even if they don't live nearby • Communication with neighbours should be at the discretion of the applicant unless there are variances
Developing Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 280 m² is not large enough to build a garage suite • Smaller site area increases site coverage and massing, and decreases permeability • Site area should only be reduced in developing areas • Site area should be reduced city wide • Site area should be reduced, particularly in mature neighbourhoods to increase affordability • Secondary suites and garage suites should be allowed on the same property, regardless of site area provided that other regulations are met • Location criteria should be removed city-wide • More study should be done before removing location criteria to address overlook concerns
Floor Area & Site Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluding stairs from floor area calculation will encourage their development inside the building • Excluding stairs from floor area calculation allows larger increases in the size of the suite

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor area and site coverage increases are good but 75 m2 is too much unless some is provided at grade • 18% site coverage is too much • Second storey size should be limited • More floor area should only be allowed if it's provided at grade • Increases will be easier to provide 2 bedrooms • Support having more flexibility at grade • Parking areas should be limited to 12% of site coverage • The width of the garage should be limited and 3 car garages should be discouraged, especially close to transit • Parking area should not be limited. The approach should be more form based • The garage suite should always be smaller than the house • The house should have to be smaller if the garage suite is larger • The size of the house should not be reduced to allow a larger suite. More flexibility should be provided • Hardsurfacing should be included in site coverage calculation
Landscaping & Amenity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balconies should be encouraged at the rear and facing the street • Balconies should be encouraged for the provision of amenity area • Amenity area shouldn't have to be private. Garage suites build community through sharing of the backyard • Amenity area shouldn't have to be private. Garage suites build community through sharing of the backyard • Balconies should be included in floor area and should not be encouraged because of noise and privacy • Balconies will make the suite larger and be used as storage areas • Landscaping should be provided to reduce visual impact of garage suites and create a streetscape in lanes • Landscaping should be a requirement • A variety of types of landscaping are appropriate and should be provided along the lane and around the garage suite • Location of landscaping should be flexible as yards are restricted by the location of the garage suite • A proper ratio of landscaping and soil to hardsurfacing should be provided

Windows & Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy impacts depend on design of the building and location of neighbouring house and amenity areas • Privacy of all adjacent neighbours is impacted • Windows should not be allowed to face the house or the side lot lines • Windows should be allowed on all sides of the garage suite as restrictions inhibit good design • Impacts from windows can be reduced through design, landscaping, and use of various window types • Complete privacy cannot be expected in a backyard. Second storey windows on a house look into amenity areas as well • Privacy impacts are greater where there is no lane • Privacy impacts are not significantly greater where there is no lane
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Neighbour Questionnaire

Administration mailed a questionnaire on June 14, 2016, to 175 households located adjacent to, or across a lane from an approved Garage or Garden suite. Thirty three responses were received, with 13 supporting or neutral and 20 raising concerns about their neighbour's Garage or Garden suite. The comments are summarized below.

Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nice for people to have the option of building a suite • Good alternative to traditional apartment buildings • Good form of housing for central neighbourhoods • Good option for aging family members • Helps with mortgage and urban sprawl • Good use of space • Encourages use of transit and active transportation • Improves the security of the alley • Like that my neighbourhood looks for different ways to increase density • Suite is visually appealing • Like the tenant living in the suite
Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property taxes are increasing as a result of infill development • The suite is too large or too tall • Loss of privacy due to window overlook or exterior stairs • Shadow impact and reduced morning sunlight • Obstruction of view • Suite is too close to neighbouring property

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be closer to the lane • Suite looks out of place in the neighbourhood • Garage and garden suites fit better on large lots • Loss of mature trees • Would have liked to have been informed prior to approval of the suite • Suite approved despite neighbour opposition • Insufficient parking or parking spaces not being utilized • Poor construction practices and length of construction period • Suite is visually unappealing • Will cause issues with snow build-up and drainage • Too many people live in the suite
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Draft Report Circulation: June to July, 2016

A draft report and proposed amendments were circulated to internal and external stakeholders from June 28, 2016, to July 25, 2016. Feedback from the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues and other community stakeholders included the following:

- Concerns about making Garden Suites a permitted use
- Concerns about the proposed maximum site coverage and loss of backyard space
- Suggestion that a term other than “Garden Suites” be used in order to avoid confusion
- Concern about encouraging the development of more garden suites without upgrades to laneway infrastructure
- Concerns about noise from balconies
- Concern about access to the garden suite from the street
- Support for the proposed height limit for flat roof buildings
- Support for design and articulation requirements
- General support for the direction of amendments concerning windows and privacy with a recommendation that input from neighbours regarding balconies windows, and separation distance be required. An increase in the separation distance between the Garden Suite and the Single Detached House from 4 m to 5 m was also suggested.

Industry stakeholders expressed support for the following amendments:

- The proposed floor area regulations
- Increase in height for flat roof buildings
- Making Garden Suites a permitted use
- Removing stairs from the calculation of floor area
- Decreasing the minimum site area
- Reductions in parking requirements

Reducing the minimum site area to 280 m² in additional zones to those proposed was also suggested.

September 14, 2016, Urban Planning Committee Meeting

Concerns were raised by community members at the September 14, 2016, Urban Planning Committee meeting that the proposed 18 percent site coverage would result in excessive total building areas on larger lots. As a result, Administration was directed to limit the proposed maximum site coverage to 14 percent, while still proceeding with the proposed 50 square metre limit on the second storey.

Following the September 14, 2016 Urban Planning Committee meeting, builders, designers, and homeowners planning to build a Garden Suite on their property contacted Administration to share concerns about restricting second storey floor area without a corresponding increase in site coverage. It was felt that these regulations would not support the buildability of these units.

May 24, 2017, Urban Planning Committee

As a result of feedback received, Administration conducted further analysis and returned to Urban Planning Committee with a report containing options for regulating floor area and site coverage. This report was circulated to internal and external stakeholders on March 21, 2017. Concerns were raised by stakeholders that the reduction in second storey area would reduce buildability. Others were concerned that the direction given by committee at the September 14, 2016, Urban Planning Committee meeting was not being followed.

At the May 24, 2017, Urban Planning Committee meeting, a number of stakeholders spoke largely in support of the suite of amendments, while some raised concerns that the options for floor area and site coverage being presented would reduce flexibility, and others felt that they would result in overly large buildings. Urban Planning Committee directed Administration to proceed with amendments as presented in the proposed bylaw.