

What We Heard and Insight Survey Results

Industry & Community Workshop Feedback Summary (February 23, 2017)

Purpose:

- DC2 still appropriate for tall towers; RA9 good for modest high rises.
- We need to have different rules for urban and suburban areas.
- Look at what other cities are doing for high rise apartment zones.

Permitted Uses:

- We need a broader mix of uses and alignment of the uses with the purpose of the zone.
- Allow for more non-residential use to help create an active building all day.
- Low intensity uses encourage land speculation.

Discretionary Uses:

- Allow more mixed use; change what is permitted and discretionary to make more sense for a high rise.
- Provide a mechanism to refuse an application on the basis of the user, so that appeals on non-related items like parking are not required.
- Need to consider the cumulative impact new developments have on the established area.

Development Regulations:

- All the high density zones aren't being used to their potential - Row Housing Zone (RA5) product being developed in Low Rise Apartment Zone (RA7) and Low Rise Apartment Zone (RA7) product developed in High Rise Apartment Zone (RA9).
- The math/economics doesn't work for current regulations height, density and floor area ratio.
- The current regulations don't work for parking, setbacks, and site area (including consolidation).
- Need dedicated play/social areas and green space necessary set number of units.
- Parking should be allowed in the podium. Parking should not count towards floor area ratio above the main floor.

Tower Form:

- Form/Shape/Architecture is important.
- Existing purpose “high rise” meaning 14-15 storeys is outdated and it does not allow for increased density near existing infrastructure.
- Podiums should be regulated to achieve specific outcomes, not just stepbacks/height. Stepbacks may not be necessary with right design. Not all designs should require a podium.

Density or Height Bonusing:

- Family-sized units and affordable housing should be encouraged, but only if the neighbourhood is lacking in those demographics. Strive for a balance and consider cumulative impacts.
- Consider incentives and tradeoffs; clear validation of the amenity trade-off table idea.
- Location density bonus within 600 m of transit nodes.
- The High Rise Overlay is not working, as it significantly reduces height.
- Do not over-regulate the design (allow variation), but provide bonuses for good design/more iconic architecture.
- Require family housing - enforce 3-bedroom apartments
- Increase floor area ratio where proposal includes a percentage of non-market or below-market housing, but discourage a concentration of these types of units in any one building - low income, should be mixed into regular housing mix.
- Need a strategy for RA9 and DC2 air rights - development rights should be able to be bought and sold.
- DC2 and RA9 need to be viewed as part of a system - how does easy approval of DC2s affect the viability of RA9?

Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues Roundtable Feedback Summary (March 8, 2017)

Purpose:

- Should address the presence of mixed uses.
- Mention articulation and active frontages.
- May need to speak to parking needs to be internal (not surface).
- Facilitate active urban communities, and provide services for the community.
- Address urban design: reference the the base, middle and top.

Permitted Uses:

- Broader mix of uses.
- Some of the current discretionary uses can go into permitted.
- Personal service can go in as long as body rub centres aren't allowed.
- Small cafes can go in- not large restaurants
- Choose the uses that are compatible with residential.
- General retail.
- Child Care Services.
- Live work units.

Discretionary Uses:

- Bars Neighbourhood Pubs (needs a size limit too).
- Remove low density uses i.e. Single Detached Housing.

Development Regulations:

- 800 m² is too small a site to allow a highrise.
- Should be street oriented not 6 m setback in the front.
- If an applicant wants a big yard setback, let them have it, but allow a smaller front setback.
- Stepbacks are important, and contributed to the success of the HA zone downtown.
- Address wind effects and require appropriate studies.

Tower Form:

- Tower should be visually interesting, 360 degree architecture.
- Varied design and finishes.
- Base requires clear glazing - no vinyl wraps on the windows.
- Some question as to the need for a specially designed 'top' in all cases.
- Support overall direction to have regulations for the base, tower and top.

- Illustrations to distinguish between mid rise and high rise would be helpful.

Density or Height Bonusing:

- Support the concept in a general sense.
- Additional heights needs serious amenity contributions in form of additional amenity space, better architecture, child care space, underground parking or screened behind useable units in the podium.
- May need to do additional work to understand the economics.
- Make sure not to give away too much.
- Need to have a cut off where the applicants have to go DC2, heights should not be unlimited in this zone.

Circulation Feedback Summary (April 10, 2017)

When a draft version of this report was circulated it contained three potential options for revisions to the zone. This feedback overwhelmingly favoured an update to the High Rise Apartment Zone (RA9) over the other options of making new zones available within the Zoning Bylaw.

- The majority of respondents preferred an update to the High Rise Apartment Zone (RA9) .
- Some respondents preferred the idea of a new high rise zone and few selected an option to draft a new urban and a suburban high rise zone.
- One response suggested a fourth option of do nothing/all high rise development use Direct Control (eliminate RA9).
- Strong support was expressed for changes to the mix of permitted and discretionary uses.
- Align this project with “missing middle” and review of RA7 and RA8 zones. Addressing this would also help with the next phase of the Infill Roadmap.
- Continue to separate development incentives from the work, but general support or interest in having development incentives in RA9.
- Additional study is needed before reducing parking for RA9 zones across the board. Parking reductions should be for areas with transportation alternatives.
- Parking should be simplified to one per dwelling.
- Additional study, modeling, and testing is needed for the regulations. Desire to see more height, remove density cap, smaller setbacks, and fewer design regulations. A more comprehensive review should also include DC2 zones for high rise apartments.
- New suburban and urban high rise zones is too detailed for a standard, non-special area zone. The zone urban/suburban is trying to regulate too much/is too aspirational.
- Strong support for and strong opposition against the “wedding cake” format of podium, tower, and signature top. There were more responses in opposition.

Identified issues with the (RA9) High Rise Apartment Zone

- The RA9 zone is the tallest and highest density standard zone in the Zoning Bylaw, but it does not enable high rise apartments in most cases.
- There is also no alignment with the desired urban design outcomes.
- A typical site in an established residential area several lots will be consolidated, resulting in a site that is approximately 50 m to 60 m wide and 35 m to 45 m deep. This represents approximately five or six RF3 lots, or three to four RF1 lots.

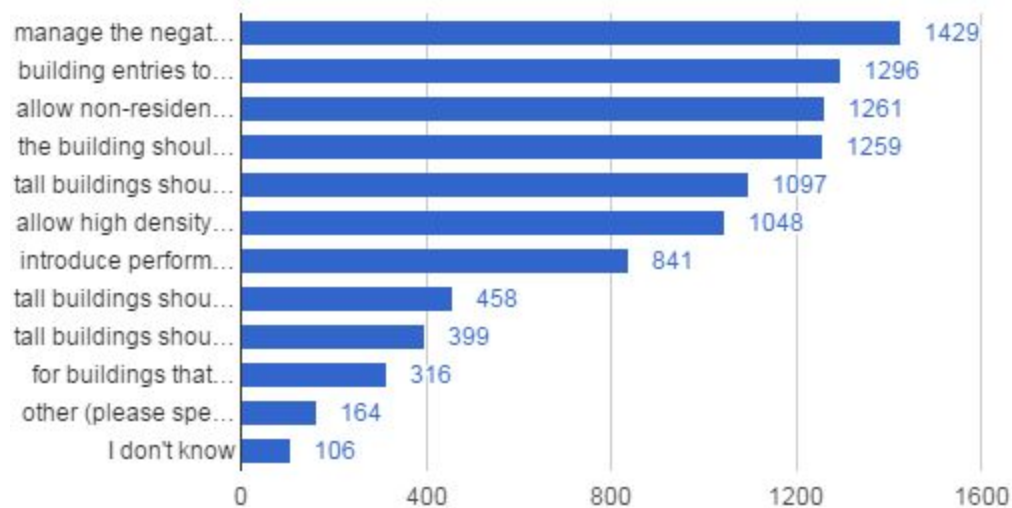
- The Setbacks (7.5 m) in this context substantially reduce the building pocket and the floor area ratio of 3.0 will be exhausted after about 6 storeys.
- For a site of this size (1750 m² - 2700 m²), the maximum density would be 325 du/ha, which would also be exceeded by the 6th storey (~18-24m) built. These results are inconsistent with the general purpose of the zone, which is to create high rise apartments.

Insight Survey Results

As part of the (RA9) High Rise Apartments Zone Review public consultation process, Administration conducted a survey from March 14 to March 21, 2017. The survey received over 1,800 responses. This survey provided an opportunity for residents to share their feedback on how to make the RA9 zone a more effective tool for high-rise residential development. This survey was distributed through Edmonton's Insight Community.

What should be the purpose of a new or revised tall residential building zone?

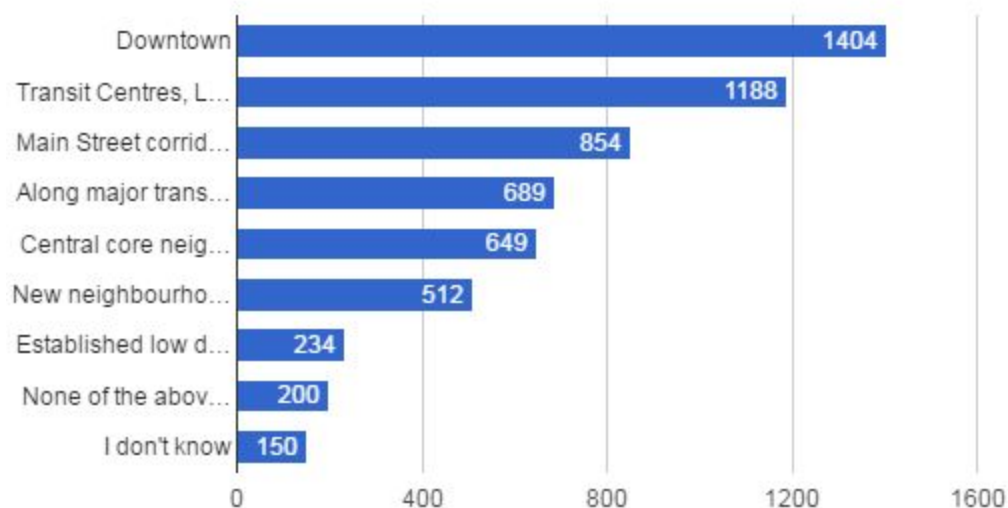
Manage the negative impacts tall buildings can have in relation to sun, wind, context, and civic life.	1,429
Building entries to face the street, and coordinate with external spaces, like transit stations, and plazas	1,296
Allow non-residential uses that are supportive of residential uses	1,261
The building should form an appropriate relationship between the activity on the street and the building facade	1,259
Tall buildings should provide opportunities for high-quality landscaped open space on-site	1,097
Allow high density residential development	1,048
Introduce performance standards	841
Tall buildings should follow a classic form and consist of three carefully integrated parts: a base building (podium), middle (tower), and top (skyline feature)	458
Tall buildings should frame the edges of streets, parks, and open space	399
For buildings that are taller than the adjacent street right-of-way is wide	316
Other (please specify)	164
I don't know	106



The standard high rise apartment zone should work in the following areas:

Please Select all that apply

Downtown	1,404
Transit Centres, LRT Stations, malls, and similar transportation hubs	1,188
Main Street corridors (pedestrian-focused shopping areas)	854
Along major transportation corridors only (avenues and busy streets)	689
Central core neighbourhoods, excluding downtown	649
New neighbourhoods (developing suburban areas)	512
Established low density neighbourhoods (infill in existing low-density residential areas)	234
None of the above - Edmonton should only allow tall residential buildings on a case-by-case basis.	200
I don't know	150



Please rate your level of agreement with the following:

	Tall residential buildings should always allow for non-residential businesses like commercial retail shops, day care, cafes, and live-work units	Low density residential uses such as houses and duplexes should not be allowed on a site zoned for high density residential apartments	The rules for tall residential buildings should be based on how the area is planned to redevelop with less emphasis on what is already built around it
Strongly agree	45%	22%	16%
Somewhat agree	36%	30%	36%
Neither agree nor disagree	10%	21%	15%
Somewhat disagree	5%	15%	20%
Strongly disagree	2%	7%	10%
Don't know	2%	6%	4%

	The rules for tall residential buildings should be based on how the area is already built, with less emphasis on how the area is planned to redevelop	I want to know exactly what a tall residential building will look like (more certainty) even if it means no opportunity to adapt over time (less flexibility)
Strongly agree	13%	17%
Somewhat agree	27%	28%
Neither agree nor disagree	21%	29%
Somewhat disagree	29%	15%
Strongly disagree	7%	5%
Don't know	3%	6%

	A 14 storey building is a high-rise	It is ok to allow the first levels above ground of a tall residential building to be for parking as long as it is hidden behind retail or residential units.	Tall residential buildings should always have activity on the ground floor, either as outward facing residential units or commercial retail units.
Strongly agree	46%	27%	38%
Somewhat agree	38%	42%	36%
Neither agree nor disagree	6%	13%	17%
Somewhat disagree	6%	9%	6%
Strongly disagree	2%	7%	2%
Don't know	3%	2%	2%

Please rate your level of agreement with the following:

	Non-residential activity on the ground floor is not important (it could be visible parking structure or inward-facing residential)	The City should require larger 3+ bedroom units in all new tall residential buildings.	The regulations should allow more development to happen (i.e. more height or density) if certain public benefits are provided by the builder.
Strongly agree	4%	21%	20%
Somewhat agree	12%	34%	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	18%	25%	16%
Somewhat disagree	33%	11%	11%
Strongly disagree	29%	6%	7%
Don't know	3%	4%	4%

PODIUM: The following questions relate to how the middle tower portion meets the ground.

Stepbacks are used to create a podium, and it means the horizontal distance a building façade is stepped back, on a horizontal plane, from the building façade immediately below it.

	Stepbacks should be required on all sides of the building to create a podium, as shown.	Stepbacks should be required only on the side(s) of the building that abut a street.	Stepbacks should not be required, but different rules should apply depending on whether there is a podium or not.	Stepbacks should have different rules depending on the width of the adjacent street(s).	Stepbacks should not be required.
Strongly agree	11%	7%	6%	9%	3%
Somewhat agree	25%	29%	25%	41%	10%
Neither agree nor disagree	33%	31%	29%	28%	28%
Somewhat disagree	18%	18%	17%	7%	24%
Strongly disagree	5%	6%	10%	4%	23%
Don't know	9%	9%	12%	11%	11%

MIDDLE: The following questions relate to how the size and shape of the main part of the tall building. Floor Area means the amount of residential or commercial space in a building, contained within the outside surface of the exterior and Basement walls, and measured as square metres.

	Assuming the same amount of Floor Area, the regulations should encourage tall, slender buildings.	Assuming the same amount of Floor Area, the regulations should encourage broad bulky buildings.	The existing 45 m maximum height (approximately 14 storeys) is the right amount for the highest density and tallest standard zone in the City of Edmonton.	Additional height should be allowed for the standard high rise apartment zone.
Strongly agree	8%	1%	9%	21%
Somewhat agree	27%	8%	18%	35%
Neither agree nor disagree	42%	42%	22%	19%
Somewhat disagree	12%	30%	25%	11%
Strongly disagree	3%	10%	15%	6%
Don't know	8%	8%	10%	9%

TOP: The top of the building refers to the highest four floors, the parapet, and typically includes penthouse suites.

	The top of the tower should add visual interest to the building and the skyline	The top of the tower does not need any specific design consideration, a flat top is fine	The top of the tower is an important part of the building and the design should be carefully considered for all buildings in the RA9 zone	The top of the tower is an important part of the building and the design should be carefully considered only in specific areas (central areas, river valley)
Strongly agree	31%	7%	25%	10%
Somewhat agree	42%	25%	34%	22%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%	25%	25%	25%
Somewhat disagree	4%	28%	10%	27%
Strongly disagree	1%	12%	3%	12%
Don't know	3%	4%	4%	4%