

Site Setback Amendments to the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone

Options to amend side setbacks for Row Housing

Recommendation:

That Administration prepare amendments to Zoning Bylaw 12800, as set out in Attachment 2 of the December 7, 2015, Sustainable Development report CR_2397, and return to a City Council Public Hearing.

Report Summary

This report proposes draft amendments to setback, private outdoor amenity area, landscaping, and design regulations for Row Housing in the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the April 21, 2015, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

1. That Administration prepare and return to Executive Committee with, amendments to the Small Scale Infill Development Zone (RF3) within Mature Neighbourhood Overlay to provide for:
 - an increased interior side setback in conjunction with a corresponding reduction of the flanking side setback (Option 1 set out in the April 21, 2015, Sustainable Development report CR_2111).
 - front setback areas that may be used for the provision of private outdoor amenity areas at-grade.
2. That Administration consider applying architectural treatment section 140.4 (18 and 19) Zoning Bylaw regulation, to the portion of the building facing the interior side yard.

Report

Background

Current regulations in the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone allow Row Housing structures on corner lots to be as close as 1.2 metres to the interior side property line. While the current setbacks provide for a functional and buildable area, these same setback requirements can also have negative impacts on neighbouring properties including:

- loss of perceived privacy from overlooking windows and rooftop terraces
- minimal area to install landscaping to screen the Row Housing structure
- loss of sunlight and increased shadowing
- large uninterrupted expanses of wall facing neighbouring properties.

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Sustainable Development report CR_2111 outlined options to address these impacts, and Executive Committee directed Administration to prepare amendments based on increasing the interior side setback along with a corresponding reduction to the flanking side setback.

For the purpose of this report and to assist the reader, definitions and supplemental diagrams of key terms used to describe spatial requirements are included in Attachment 1.

Proposed Amendments

Amendments proposed in Attachment 2 are summarized as follows:

Setbacks

A reduction to the flanking side setback from 2.5 metres to 2 metres in conjunction with an increase to the interior side setback from 1.2 metres to 3 metres is proposed. This will result in an overall reduction in width of the allowable building pocket by 1.3 metres. An enlarged interior side setback offers additional area for at grade amenity areas and enhanced landscaping. The proposed reduction to the flanking side setback will result in a more urban Row Housing form, while preserving a sufficient yard space to accommodate landscaping, projections such as porches and stairs, and variations in building setbacks to avoid the presence of a blank two storey monolithic wall facing the street.

As a function of an overall reduction in the width of the allowable building pocket, on a typical sized lot within the boundary of the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay and with an assumed front setback of 6 metres, the building pocket area is slightly smaller than the maximum prescribed site coverage for Row Housing in the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone. To limit further reduction of the building pocket area on sites where the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay requires a front setback greater than 6 metres, a tradeoff should be made to limit the front setback for Row Housing on corner lots to a maximum of 6 metres. Instituting a maximum front setback will maintain a functional building pocket and redevelopment opportunities for Row Housing. Attachment 3 provides a comparison of the current and proposed relationship between site coverage and setback regulations.

Private Outdoor Amenity Area

To accommodate ground level private outdoor amenity area within the interior side setback, rigid dimensional requirements of 4 metres by 4 metres are proposed to be replaced with a more flexible minimum at grade amenity area requirement of 15 metres square, and a minimum dimensional requirement of 3 metres. Additionally, current regulations prohibiting the dedication of amenity area in the front yard are removed. Together, these changes are intended to provide greater flexibility in accommodating useable amenity areas that add to the livability and quality of life of the residents. When above grade amenity area is provided via a rooftop terrace, a stepback is proposed. Introducing a stepback requirement is intended to alleviate concerns between

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neighbouring properties regarding privacy and overlook, and create a pedestrian-friendly environment by ensuring structures maintain a human scale.

Additional Changes

Further amendments are proposed to provide specific guidance regarding landscaping and appearance of the Row House structures. Specifically, landscaping is proposed between neighbouring properties in order to provide transition to better screen Row Housing structures, and mitigate impacts to abutting properties. In addition, the provision of at least one entrance facing each abutting public roadway helps to activate all street frontages and reduce the occurrence of blank walls facing the front yard.

The proposed amendments also require incorporating greater architectural treatment and individually defining each dwelling on all exterior faces. Proposed changes are intended to eliminate expanses of blank walls, and provide visual interest when the structure is viewed from neighbouring properties. This will reduce the visual impacts on adjacent properties and better integrate Row Housing developments with the surrounding community.

Row Housing has similar impacts on neighbouring properties as other listed uses within the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone. To ensure a consistent streetscape throughout the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone, strategic amendments are proposed for all uses within this zone. Proposed amendments include:

- reducing the flanking side setback for all uses in the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone to encourage a pedestrian friendly and urban feeling streetscape
- including Apartment and Stacked Row Housing in regulations specific to Row Housing on corner lots to manage common negative impacts on neighbouring properties.

Implementing the proposed amendments in the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone is intended to improve the overall livability for residents within the zone.

Policy

The Way We Grow, Municipal Development Plan, Bylaw 15100:

- 3.5, Support redevelopment and residential infill that contribute to the livability and adaptability of established neighbourhoods and which are sensitive to existing development.
- 5.2, Require development to fit with the existing and planned neighbourhood context, to respect the scale, form, massing, style and materials of the neighbourhoods and to incorporate other design elements that create a transition between the new development and the existing neighbourhood.
- 4.4, Provide a broad and varied housing choice, incorporating housing for various demographic and income groups in all neighbourhoods.

Corporate Outcomes

This report contributes to achieving the corporate outcome “Edmonton is attractive and compact” as it provides options to transform Edmonton’s urban Form and elevate the livability and attractiveness within established and mature neighbourhoods, as described in *The Way Ahead* – City of Edmonton Strategic Plan, 2009-2018.

Public Consultation

Public consultation for this project was based on a meeting with Canadian Home Builders’ Association – Edmonton Region, an interactive workshop attended by members of the public, builders, designers, and community leagues, engagement with the Edmonton Insight Community and a publicly available online survey. A summary of the feedback received is outlined below and further details are included in Attachment 4.

Canadian Home Builders’ Association – Edmonton Region

On September 11, 2015, a presentation and question and answer session was held with Canadian Home Builders’ Association. Industry stakeholders were supportive of the direction of options proposed that encouraged infill Row Housing development that is sensitive to existing development and manages impacts on neighbouring land uses.

Interactive Workshop

On September 14, 2015, Administration presented a variety of setback options to residents, builders, designers, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, and community league representatives at an interactive workshop. Focused discussion occurred around each of the following subject areas: changes to side setbacks, amenity area requirements, overlook and privacy issues, and improving architectural interest. Consensus on these discussion areas was largely achieved amongst all in attendance. Opinions expressed supported shifting Row Housing structures closer to the flanking side lot line, allowing greater flexibility with regards to provision of amenity area in the front yard, encouraging design that respects the privacy of neighbouring properties, and improving overall architectural design of Row Housing and compatibility with existing development. Feedback received was used to create the proposed amendments.

Surveys

An online survey was distributed to the public and members of the Edmonton Insight Community in October 2015. The online survey garnered 88 responses through members of the public and 1493 responses through members of the Insight Community. Overall, responses from the online surveys echoed key themes expressed at the interactive workshop. Validation of the workshop themes resulted in Administration drafting the proposed amendments to the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone, as described in Attachment 2.

Justification of Recommendation

The proposed amendments to Zoning Bylaw 12800 are intended to address privacy and built form issues related to Row Housing in the (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone by relocating Row Housing structures closer to the public roadways, allowing for greater amenity area flexibility, and requiring greater use of landscaping and architectural treatments on facades.

Attachments

1. Glossary
2. Draft Text Amendment to Zoning Bylaw 12800
3. Relationship between Setbacks and Site Coverage
4. Public Consultation Summary

Others Reviewing this Report

- D. Wandzura, General Manager, Transportation Services
- K. Rozmahel, General Manager, Corporate Services