

## Mature Neighbourhood Overlay Public Involvement Plan Summary

### Project Purpose

City Administration is undertaking a review of the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay (MNO) in accordance with Action 17 of Edmonton's Infill Roadmap to ensure that new low density development in existing areas is sensitive to surrounding development, while also making it more effective and easier for builders and landowners to develop in the mature areas of the city. The review of the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay will also help the City meet the infill objectives outlined in *The Way We Grow*, the *Residential Infill Guidelines* and the *Elevate Report*.

### Project Scope

The MNO is a set of 24 modifying regulations that aim to ensure that new development in the mature areas of Edmonton is sensitive with surrounding development. It is a tool to shape redevelopment in the city's mature areas. The MNO is applied to five of the low-density residential zones, which include:

- (RF1) Single Detached Residential Zone
- (RF2) Low Density Infill Zone
- (RF3) Small Scale Infill Development Zone
- (RF4) Semi-detached Residential Zone
- (RF5) Row Housing Zone

The intent of the review is to make infill in these mature areas easier and better for communities, developers, and city staff through improved regulations. This could mean a variety of changes. The review will look at the MNO now, how it can support infill in the future, and what Zoning Bylaw changes or other tools we may need to get us there.

The scope of the MNO Review will be within the limits established in Action 17 of the Infill Roadmap. The objectives of the MNO Review are embedded in Action 17 of the Infill Roadmap itself. Action 17 states:

- Revise the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay of the Zoning Bylaw in order to*
- 1. make it a more effective tool to support infill in our mature neighbourhoods,*
  - 2. reduce the need for variances and Class B Development Permits, and*
  - 3. improve the approvals process.*

*This will help support more infill across the wide diversity of established neighbourhoods by continuing to:*

4. *encourage infill that responds to the context of a property,*
5. *increasing predictability in the approvals process, and*
6. *providing more design flexibility for new housing.*

The above numbered objectives will serve as the starting point and basis for the review of the MNO. Administration's goal is to make the MNO more effective for communities and those who build within them. Once a draft of a revised MNO is finalized, Administration will make a recommendation to City Council. City Council will make the final decision on whether or not to accept any amendments to the MNO (text amendments to Zoning Bylaw 12800).

It is Administration's goal to have the MNO Review complete engagement activities within eight months from the project initiation date and advance any Zoning Bylaw amendments by late 2016. This timeline will allow Administration to complete a thorough public consultation process while also meeting the City's commitment to initiate the Infill Roadmap's actions by 2016.

### **Background**

Prior to the adoption of the MNO, the mature areas of Edmonton were seeing suburban style homes being developed that, in the opinion of many community members and City staff, did not fit within the context of the existing development. These new developments included features such as front attached garages and were built to the maximum allowable height and lot coverage of the zone. These developments were perceived as having an adverse effect on the existing character of the neighbourhoods such as pedestrian-oriented streets, lanes, rear detached garages, front porches, and lower height. As a response to these concerns, the MNO was developed and included in the Zoning Bylaw 12800 in 2001. The introduction of the MNO resulted in a lower maximum height for the five zones it applies to as well as 23 other regulations that aim to ensure that new development is contextually sensitive to the surrounding existing development.

### **Public Participation**

The MNO Review requires a thorough and robust consultation process with a high level of involvement from all stakeholders and members of the public in order to:

- Ensure the suite of regulations achieve the objectives laid out in Action 17,
- Enable a diversity of stakeholders to participate fully in the process, and
- Provide Council with an accurate indication of support for, or concerns with, any proposed amendments.

It is Administration's intention to achieve a high level of active participation from stakeholders and the public in the MNO Review process. This will include the following stages:

1. Initial project consultation.
2. Reviewing regulations, educating, and perspective seeking/sharing.
3. Developing solutions and building commitment.
4. Preparing changes to the Overlay.
5. Presentation to Executive Committee, City Council decision at Public Hearing, and communicating the changes.

The information gathered from public and stakeholder involvement in the MNO Review will be used to provide Council with amendments to the MNO that meets the goals outlined in Edmonton's Infill Roadmap, as well as providing Council with an overview of support for, or concerns with, any proposed amendments highlighted by members of the public.

#### **Public and Stakeholder Involvement Methods**

It is essential that a wide variety of participants are identified and involved in the formulation of the recommendations to ensure that any amendments proposed to the MNO take in a broad range of public and stakeholder thoughts, opinions, stories, and concerns. While the development community works with the regulations of the MNO regularly, it is the existing and future residents of the mature areas who live with new development after it has been constructed. It is for these reasons that Administration must ensure a broad range of views are collected and incorporated into the review of the MNO. Additionally it is also vital that different stakeholders are engaged in ways that maximize their respective contributions.

Potential primary process participants include:

- Canadian Home Builders' Association, Edmonton Region
- Edmonton Construction Association
- Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Edmonton Real Estate Board
- Individual Mature Area Community Leagues

- Infill Development Edmonton Association
- Members of the Public
- Urban Development Institute
- Sustainable Development and other City of Edmonton staff

Administration will work closely with the forthcoming Community Infill Panel on many aspects of the MNO review. As part of their work, this group will provide suggestions and advice on how to effectively engage the public and provide feedback on regulatory options. The Community Infill Panel is a group that will consist of 13 members who represent a broad cross-section of informed infill perspectives, including mature area neighbourhoods, urban planners, design professionals, and the development and construction industries.

### **Project Stages**

The MNO Review project will place a significant emphasis on public engagement to ensure that a wide variety of stakeholder views are considered and incorporated into any changes in the MNO regulations.

Administration intends to undertake three stages of public consultation and involvement (Stages 1 – 3), an informational stage about consultation outcomes and possible draft amendments (Stage 4), in addition to the required Public Hearing procedures (Stage 5). Each stage achieves a different goal and is broken down into sub tasks as follows.

#### Stage 1: Initial project consultation (November 2015 – January 2016)

Stage 1, the Initial project consultation stage, will be undertaken to lay the foundation for an effective MNO Review and to gather background information on why the MNO was originally introduced as a regulatory tool in Zoning Bylaw 12800.

- Internal Staff Interviews (Complete)
- Office of Public Engagement Network to review the Public Involvement Plan (Complete).
- Edmonton Federation of Community League review and input on engagement approach (Complete).

- Executive Committee of City Council presentation and discussion on the draft Project Scope and Public Involvement Summary (December 7, 2015).
- Set up project website and build a stakeholder email list.
- Conduct an administrative review of the MNO as well as best practices from other jurisdictions.
- Community Infill Panel to review and provide feedback and suggestions for the further refinement of the Project Charter and Public Involvement Plan.
- Update project website with project description the proposed and timeline

Stage 2: Reviewing regulations, educating, and perspective sharing (January – March 2016)

Stage 2 will be undertaken to garner a better understanding of the variety of perspectives on the MNO, clarify what is working with the MNO currently, and to identify which areas can be improved upon. These findings will be gathered from stakeholders and participants through workshops, education sessions, surveys, and via social media. This rich foundation of information will provide thoughts, themes, and identify areas of focus for moving the MNO Review forward. Different stakeholders will have engagement events tailored to them.

- Community Infill Panel discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the MNO and to review best practices from other jurisdictions.
- Host two community engagement events and one industry stakeholder workshop to provide information about the existing context of the MNO regulations, communicate the goals of the MNO review, and identify and collect feedback on the current state of the MNO and the variety of values and concerns related to mature areas. The industry workshop will occur during business hours, the other two community engagement events will occur during the evening, in different geographic locations, on different days, and will be open to the public.
- Collaborate with Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues and industry in a number of meetings to discuss the regulations of the MNO, and identify areas for improvements.
- Interview residents of recent infill development as well as their neighbours to gather their thoughts on their experiences with a specific focus on the MNO regulations.

- Hold a Sustainable Development workshop for planning staff (Development Officers, Land-Use Planners, Heritage Planners, and Urban Designers) to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the MNO and to review and discuss the options to solicit feedback, concerns, and ideas.
- Distribute an initial survey to seniors, cultural groups and new Canadians regarding the existing context of the MNO regulations and communicate the goal of the project.
- Develop a unique approach to engage Edmonton's youth, post-secondary students, and other future or soon-to-be home buyers.
- Use Social Media and encourage additional and ongoing feedback through these means and through the project website.
- Publish the summary of consultation feedback to date in a "What We Did, Heard, and Learned" document with Stage 2 data and update project website.

### Stage 3: Developing solutions and building commitment (March – April 2016)

Stage 3 will review the consultation findings of the previous stage to develop knowledge of emerging themes and develop a list of issues to address with draft options to amend the MNO's regulations.

- Review Stage 2 data with the Community Infill Panel to develop a list of potential emerging themes and high level directions for changes to the MNO.
- Translate the emerging themes and high level directions into a draft options publication.
- Hold Multi-stakeholder and Community Infill Panel workshops to discuss how public/stakeholder input guided the process and to solicit feedback on the draft options publication.
- Set up a Community Insight survey to solicit preferences and feedback on different draft options for changing the MNO.
- Update Social Media and encourage additional and ongoing feedback through these means and the project website.
- Publish an updated version of the summary of consultation feedback to date in the "What We Did, Heard, and Learned" document with Stage 3 data and update project website.

#### Stage 4: Preparing Changes to the Overlay (May – June 2016)

Stage 4 will mainly focus on refining the draft options and developing any proposed amendments to the MNO, raising public awareness, and gauging support for the proposed changes.

- Use Stage 3 data and information to draft amendments to MNO with input from the Community Infill Panel.
- Host two community engagement events and one industry engagement event to communicate how public/stakeholder input guided the process and informed the draft changes, and gather reactions to the draft changes. The community engagement events will be held on different evenings in different geographic locations.
- Complete additional revisions to draft amendments based on Stage 4 consultation activities.
- Publish a summary of consultation feedback to-date in the “What We Did, Heard, and Learned” document and include a table summary of the draft amendments.
- Post draft of proposed amendments on the project website with information about how public/stakeholder input guided the process.

#### Stage 5: Public Hearing and Communicating the Changes (July – October 2016)

Stage 5 will involve communicating and presenting proposed changes to the MNO before Executive Committee and then Council at a Public Hearing, and communicating the changes and what they mean for residents, builders, designers and Sustainable Development staff.

- Present the draft MNO amendments at public events to raise awareness of the project and the anticipated Edmonton City Council Executive Committee and Public Hearing dates.
- Advertise draft amendments for the Public Hearing.
- Present public consultation summary and draft amendments to Executive Committee.
- Present public consultation summary and draft amendments to Council at Public Hearing.
- Communicate the approved changes and develop an information campaign.

- Conduct industry and staff training seminars, update internal processes and forms to reflect the changes.
- Post project evaluation.

The five stages outlined will result in a variety of public involvement events with community and industry stakeholders. This broad range of engagement actions and activities will allow many opportunities for stakeholder input and will ensure broad awareness of outcomes and knowledge of new procedures or approaches.

### **Engaging Edmonton's Diversity**

In order to ensure that the MNO Review reaches further and seeks to hear the widest range of voices and perspectives, Administration will take steps to engage the perspectives of youth, K-12 students, post-secondary students, cultural groups, and new Canadians to learn from their experiences and about their expectations for the future. Engaging a diversity of Edmontonians to be involved in the project and inviting them to provide ideas and feedback throughout the process is a key project goal. As such, materials and processes developed to support the MNO review conversation will be accessible, written in plain language, and translated into other languages as appropriate.

### **Project Budget**

Administration has identified the need for external consulting support for the public/stakeholder consultation portion of the MNO Review project.

Administration has identified a budget of \$95,000 to fund communication and consultant services as well as the proposed engagement activities detailed in this public involvement summary.

### **Building Awareness**

In order to have broad involvement it will be necessary to achieve a high level of public awareness about the project and communicate ways for the public to be involved. A communications strategy will be developed to detail the strategy and tactics for building brand and targeted awareness of the project.