

Point of Contact Options for Mature Neighbourhoods - Development Process

Facilitating Better Outcomes Through a Mature Area Point of Contact Team

Recommendation:

That the September 15, 2015, Sustainable Development report CR_2367, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report provides information on a Mature Area Point of Contact Team that Administration is currently developing.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the October 5/6, 2015, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That the September 15, 2015, Sustainable Development report CR_2367, be postponed to the October 5/6, 2015, Executive Committee meeting, and that Administration work with the Agenda Review Committee to schedule a time for the item.

At the March 16, 2015, City Council Public Hearing, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report to Executive Committee outlining options to facilitate a point of contact for mature neighbourhoods, including potentially creating district-oriented positions for issues such as:

1. subdivision applications
2. development and building permits
3. development compliance
4. informing residents about statutory plans and City regulations

Report

Edmonton is growing and, over the next ten years, it is forecasted that the city's population will grow by an additional 170,000 people. The City's strategy is to balance growth up, in and out to enable an attractive and affordable range of housing types in well-designed and well-connected communities. Mature and established neighbourhoods have a key role to play in the ongoing growth and change in our city.

Infill is happening in Edmonton. In 2014, the City approved over 12,000 new housing units city-wide, and over 2,000 of these were new infill homes (a combination of low,

medium, and high density forms). Infill provides an opportunity for renewal and regeneration of mature and established neighbourhoods and enabling new homes in older communities is an important way to sustain our mature and established neighbourhoods.

Edmonton's Infill Roadmap is a two-year work program that supports more and better infill, outlines the key steps ahead, responds to new challenges and opportunities as they arise, helps remove barriers to encourage new and more diverse housing in the city, and promotes ongoing conversation about city change. Administration has recognized that additional issues have arisen as the Roadmap is implemented and infill development increases. Administration, along with its partners in the community and development industry, is working to be proactive, adaptable and responsive to these issues. A big part of this involves supporting ongoing conversations about infill and neighbourhood change.

Communities have requested a single point of contact within Administration to continue these conversations, understand Edmonton's planning and development process and associated bylaws, and to provide residents and community leagues with ease of access for information on development in their communities. Citizens have voiced their frustration that information on planning and development for mature and established neighbourhoods must be accessed through a variety of channels at the City which can be confusing to navigate due to the variety of subject matter experts that work across the different sections and departments of Administration. This puts citizens at a disadvantage relative to builders and developers who may have more experience with the planning and development process.

Administration is currently developing a team to be a point of contact for mature and established neighbourhoods. The team will be developed in fall of 2015, and will consist of two Mature Area Development Coordinators, assigned to specific geographic areas, and a supervisor. These positions will:

- act as conduits into all City processes regarding rezoning, subdivision, development permit applications, building permit applications, development compliance issues, and will provide general information to the public on the City's regulations and practices as they relate to development in mature neighbourhoods
- provide advisory services to members of the development industry and the public on how to navigate Public Hearings and Subdivision and Development Appeal Board hearings
- act as a facilitator and liaison between stakeholders and subject matter experts
- organize and facilitate meetings between City staff responsible for the various aspects of developments and enforcement if necessary
- lead or assist with implementing action items in Edmonton's Infill Roadmap
- meet with Community Leagues and other stakeholders and attend evening meetings as required

Administration is equipped to initiate the implementation of a Mature Area Point of Contact team through the assignment of unallocated positions. A service package will be advanced through the 2016-2018 budget process to formalize further resource requirements.

Administration also examined the option of appointing existing staff as mature area contact persons in the respective sections of Administration (i.e. subdivision, permitting, development compliance, rezoning, etc.) and decided that a new team would provide better and more effective customer service to residents and communities, and help to ensure that any impacts associated with infill initiatives are mitigated and resolved.

Policy

The Way We Grow, Municipal Development Plan, Bylaw 15100

- 3.5.2.2 – Provide a range of community planning services for mature neighbourhoods
- Edmonton's Infill Roadmap
- Action 20 - City Infill Team

Public Consultation

This report was circulated to the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues and they expressed a desire for the Mature Area Development Coordinators to be given the authority to communicate with, and facilitate meetings between, the respective subject matter experts within Administration when dealing with a particular development. Further, the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues expressed support for the proposed Mature Area Development Coordinators to be geographically based neighbourhood development experts. Essentially, staff who can efficiently visit a neighbourhood frequently and know its specific issues and concerns because they work with its citizens and community leaders on a regular basis.

Budget/Financial Implications

Administration is in the process of establishing a Mature Area Development team through the assignment of five unallocated positions within the Current Planning Branch. A service package will be advanced through the 2016-2018 budget process to formalize these resource requirements. These will be ongoing positions that are funded through the Current Planning Branch.

The assigned team will act as a conduit into all city processes regarding rezoning, subdivision, development permit applications, building permit applications, development compliance issues, and will provide general information to the public on the City's regulations and practices as they relate to development and mature neighbourhoods.