

City Plan Density Target Amendment

Position of Administration: Support

Summary

Charter Bylaw 21144 proposes text amendments to The City Plan to incorporate the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) Growth Plan's greenfield density targets and expectations. Charter Bylaw 21144 also proposes two Administrative amendments to correct a minor City Plan map legend error and adjust The City Plan's cover page text to reflect that the document has been amended.

Administration supports this application because it:

- Maintains The City Plan's original direction for residential greenfield development areas to meet or exceed the regional density target of 45 dwelling units per net residential hectare.
- Supports The City Plan's intention for compact development and growth of new and existing neighbourhoods.
- Rectifies The City Plan's greenfield density target policy gap created by the rescindment of the Growth Plan.

Application Details

At the January 20, 2025 Special City Council Meeting, Council passed the following motion:

That Administration prepare amendments to The City Plan to incorporate Regional Growth Plan density targets and expectations, and return to a future City Council Public Hearing.

Text Amendments

In response to the motion, and in consideration of existing requirements and interpretive guidance provided by the Growth Plan, Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) and the Edmonton Metropolitan Planning Toolkit (REF Toolkit), this application proposes to:

- Revise policy 2.3.2.6 to require a minimum residential greenfield development density of 45 dwelling units per net residential hectare.

- Introduce a new appendix clarifying policy 2.3.2.6 interpretation and application, specifying that:
 - Density calculations are measured at the Area Structure Plan (ASP) level as the number of dwelling units per net residential hectare, for land designated solely as residential.
 - Density in Neighbourhood Structure Plans (NSPs) can deviate up to five dwelling units per net residential hectare below the ASP's minimum density, as long as the overall ASP area meets the required minimum.
 - ASPs approved before the Growth Plan are exempt from meeting the minimum density target, provided that their density does not fall below the minimum target in effect at the time of their approval.
 - Where an ASP is exempt, any existing or new NSPs are also exempt provided they are subordinate and consistent with that ASP.
 - Sites with multi-modal transportation access or proximity to employment areas are encouraged to exceed the minimum density.
- Adjust The City Plan's table of contents and page numbers to reflect the added appendix.
- Delete The City Plan's regional density target text reference (page 139).

Administrative Amendments

The proposed Administrative amendments are as follows:

- Correct The City Plan's Map 10D legend misalignment.
- Amend The City Plan's cover page by removing the version number and clarifying that The City Plan's Charter Bylaw has been amended.

Community Insights

This application was shared with BILD Edmonton Metro to seek their feedback on whether the proposed amendments aligned with their members' understanding of the Growth Plan's current direction with respect to density targets. This approach was selected because the proposed amendments take a like-for-like direction from the Growth Plan, they're not introducing new policy direction, and they respond to a motion received from City Council.

BILD Edmonton Metro indicated that they had no objections to the proposed amendments.

Application Analysis

Regional Considerations

The EMRB dissolved on March 31, 2025, and its Growth Plan was rescinded. This created a density target policy gap in The City Plan. To address this, this application incorporates the necessary Growth Plan's density targets, as directed by the City Council motion on January 20, 2025.

This application focuses solely on addressing the density target policy gap. It does not revise other EMRB or Growth Plan references within The City Plan due to ongoing regional planning and collaboration. These regional initiatives may require future City Plan amendments as planning advances on the development of Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks and

Intermunicipal Development Plans, as mandated by the Municipal Government Act. Retaining existing EMRB content in The City Plan will not impede the implementation of this density target amendment.

Council Direction

While the January 20, 2025, City Council motion directed the inclusion of all Growth Plan targets, this application selectively incorporates the greenfield density target and expectations. Administration recommends this approach because The City Plan meets or exceeds the Growth Plan's other density targets through The City Plan's:

- Target of 50% infill city-wide, surpassing the Growth Plan's 25% intensification target.
- Node and Corridor Network, which incorporates and expands upon the Growth Plan's Transit-Oriented Development Centres, accommodating greater density and growth opportunities.

Accordingly, the remaining policy gap between The City Plan and the Growth Plan, as it relates to density targets, is the 45 dwelling units per net residential hectare requirement for greenfield development.

The City Plan

This application supports The City Plan's intention for compact development and growth of new and existing neighbourhoods through the incorporation of a minimum residential greenfield density target, which can:

- Support housing diversity thereby providing Edmontonians with more housing choices.
- Accommodate a larger population within our existing boundaries.
- Improve Edmonton's net financial position by reducing some capital growth requirements for the new infrastructure, facilities and services that Edmontonians rely on.

Policy Implementation

This application proposes to revise policy 2.3.2.6 and specify that the 45 dwelling units per net residential hectare minimum density applies to residential greenfield development. The City Plan defines 'greenfield development' as the conversion of land that has not previously been developed; this definition aligns with the Growth Plan's intent to apply the target to land that has not been previously developed or planned, ensuring consistent implementation of the minimum density target.

The proposed appendix to The City Plan provides additional support for the interpretation and application of the revised policy 2.3.2.6. This appendix describes how to calculate the minimum density target, where greater density is encouraged, and how and when statutory plans must meet the minimum target. This appendix is consistent with the direction in the Growth Plan, REF and REF Toolkit.

Specifically, the minimum density of 45 dwelling units per net residential hectare will be calculated at the ASP level, and applies to land solely designated as residential. Calculating the

minimum density at the ASP level allows for some flexibility at the NSP level, where the density for some NSPs may be lower than their parent ASP provided that the minimum density of the overall ASP area is met.

ASPs adopted before the Growth Plan are exempt from meeting the minimum density provided their density does not fall below the minimum density target in effect at the time of their approval. Likewise, where an ASP is exempt, any existing or new NSPs are also exempt, provided they are subordinate to and consistent with that ASP. This exemption carries forward like-for-like direction from the Growth Plan, REF and REF Toolkit into The City Plan.

An online resource outlining the historic minimum density targets will be available on the City of Edmonton's website to support the implementation of these policy exemptions.

Appendices


1. Mark-up and Rationale of Proposed Amendments to The City Plan

Mark-up and Rationale of Proposed Amendments to The City Plan

The proposed amendments are outlined below using the following formatting standards.

- Black text = Existing City Plan text
- ~~Strikethrough red text~~ = Deletion of City Plan text
- Red Text = Proposed changes/additions to City Plan text

City Plan page #	Mark Up	Rationale
1	V-1.0 CHARTER BYLAW 20,000, as amended.	Removed the City Plan version reference to reduce future cover page amendments. Added "As amended" to reflect document amendments. Exact bylaw numbers will be outlined on the consolidation page.
3	APPENDICES 176 A. Legislative Requirements and Policy Context 178 Development Influences and Constraints 181 180 List of Nodes 182 181 List of Corridors	Adjusted the City Plan's table of contents page numbers to reflect the added appendix.
58	2.3.2.6 Require that residential greenfield development meets or exceeds a minimum density of 45 dwelling units per net residential hectare. all districts meet or exceed regional density targets as they develop and redevelop over time. APPENDIX See 6. Minimum Residential Greenfield Development Density for policy 2.3.2.6 application	Revised the policy to carry forward the intentions of the 2017 Growth Plan's policies 3.1.4(d) and 4.3.1(a), requiring greenfield areas to meet the minimum greenfield density of 45 du/nrha as outlined in Schedule 6 of the 2017 Growth Plan. Added text next to the policy to direct readers to additional interpretation direction in the new appendix page.

City Plan page #	Mark Up	Rationale
139	Developing and future growth areas will continue to provide greenfield development opportunities, taking their direction from approved plans. New plans for future growth areas will be prepared as per policy guidance from The City Plan. and in alignment with regional density targets.	Removed text given that the target is now described in City Plan policy 2.3.2.6.
155	Map 10D 	Amended City Plan Map 10D legend to correct the misalignment of symbols.
180	List of Nodes 181 180	Renumbered this page to reflect the addition of a new page.
181	List of Corridors 182 181	Renumbered this page to reflect the addition of a new page.

City Plan page #	Mark Up	Rationale
	<p>6. Minimum Residential Greenfield Development Density The minimum residential greenfield development density specified in policy 2.3.2.6 shall be used and interpreted as follows:</p> <p>a. Minimum residential greenfield development density is measured at the Area Structure Plan level as the number of dwelling units per net residential hectare (du/nrha) on land solely designated as residential;</p>	<p>Added a new page in the City Plan appendices to communicate policy 2.3.2.6 interpretation direction. This page will become the new page 180 within City Plan. The clauses are adapted from the 2017 Growth Plan, Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) and REF Toolkit to carry forward the equivalent expectations and necessary direction from those documents to support implementation.</p> <p>Clause (a) was copied from the 2017 Growth Plan, s5.7.1(a), with "<i>residential</i>" and "<i>development</i>" added to reflect City Plan terminology and clarify that the minimum density target applies only to residential growth, given the City Plan's broad definition of greenfield development. Added the phrase "<i>on land solely designated as residential</i>" from the REF Toolkit (page 26) to provide clarity for implementation.</p>
<p>NEW PAGE 180</p>	<p>b. The density within a portion of an Area Structure Plan, such as a Neighbourhood Structure Plan, may be lower than the minimum residential greenfield development density, as long as the variation at the Neighbourhood Structure Plan level does not exceed five dwelling units per net residential hectare below the required minimum residential greenfield development density of the overall Area Structure Plan. Notwithstanding this permitted variation, the overall total Area Structure Plan area shall meet the required minimum residential greenfield development density;</p>	<p>Clause (b) was copied from the 2017 Growth Plan, s5.7.1(d) and modified to remove references to 'sub area plans' to better align with statutory plans within Edmonton's planning framework.</p>

City Plan page #	Mark Up	Rationale
NEW PAGE 180	c. Area Structure Plans, adopted in accordance with the Municipal Government Act prior to October 26, 2017, are exempt from meeting policy 2.3.2.6, provided that the Area Structure Plan's residential density is not reduced below the minimum residential greenfield development density target in effect at the time of the Area Structure Plan's adoption;	<p>Added clause (c) to carry forward like-for-like direction from the 2017 Growth Plan and REF. Clause (c) is equivalent to s5.7.1(e) of the 2017 Growth Plan and s8.2 of the REF which exempts Area Structure Plans (ASPs) adopted before the Growth Plan's adoption (October 26, 2017) from meeting the minimum density target of 45 hu/nrha provided that the ASP's planned density is not reduced below the minimum density targets set in the 2009 Capital Region Growth Plan.</p> <p>An external resource will be created and added to the Plans in Effect webpage to help inform clause (c) implementation. This resource will include the map and density targets from the 2009 Capital Region Growth Plan found on page 17 of the REF Toolkit.</p>
	d. Where an Area Structure Plan is exempt under clause (c), any existing or new Neighbourhood Structure Plans are exempt from meeting policy 2.3.2.6, provided they are subordinate to and consistent with that Area Structure Plan;	Added clause (c) to carry forward like-for-like interpretive direction from the REF toolkit (page 20) which states that where an ASP is exempt from meeting the minimum density target of 45 du/nrha, any new or existing Neighbourhood Structure Plans are also exempt provided they are subordinate and consistent with their parent ASP.
	e. Locations with multi-modal transportation access and/or proximity to employment areas are encouraged to exceed the minimum residential greenfield development density.	Added clause (e) to guide development planning in the future growth area without a planned node or corridor. Clause (e) was copied from the 2017 Growth Plan, s5.7.1(f) with slight rewording to align with City Plan language rather than 2017 Growth Plan terminology.