

Charter Bylaw 19013

Text amendment to Zoning Bylaw 12800 - Update to the (RA9) High Rise Apartment Zone - One Year Review

Purpose

The proposed amendments will adjust the maximum height, density, and floor area ratio, clarify intent for the design of the uppermost floors of a tower, and clarify how landscaping is to be provided. Housekeeping amendments are also proposed as it relates to some defined terms.

Readings

Charter Bylaw 19013 is ready for three readings after the public hearing has been held. If Council wishes to give three readings during a single meeting, then prior to moving third reading, Council must unanimously agree “That Charter Bylaw 19013 be considered for third reading.”

Advertising and Signing

This Bylaw has been advertised in the Edmonton Journal on Friday, September 6, 2019 and Saturday September 14, 2019.

Position of Administration

Administration supports this Bylaw.

Previous Committee Action

At the June 25, 2019 Urban Planning Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration prepare amendments to Zoning Bylaw 12800 as generally outlined in Attachment 1 of the June 25, 2019, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR_6954, and return to a future City Council Public Hearing.

Report Summary

In June 2018, City Council approved updates to the (RA9) High Rise Apartment Zone that were intended to increase the use of the zone. Since then, Administration

monitored the performance of the zone and identified additional recommended amendments to the (RA9) High Rise Apartment Zone. The proposed refinements encourage the development of modest high rise buildings through the development permit process without using the Site Specific Development Control Provisions (DC2). The intended outcomes of this zoning tool are transit-oriented and mixed-use apartment buildings.

Report

The (RA9) High Rise Apartment Zone is the tallest and highest-density standard zone in Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw 12800. The zone is typically located in central neighbourhoods, as well as along existing and planned LRT routes. On June 11, 2018, City Council passed a substantial update to the (RA9) High Rise Apartment Zone. The zone is configured to permit the development of an 18 to 20 storey apartment building with a variety of regulations that require good urban design outcomes: aesthetically pleasing architecture that supports a vibrant local economy and provides housing that encourages walkable streets.

Since the amendments were approved, one application has been received for a high rise apartment building on an RA9 zoned site in the Oliver neighbourhood. As this is the intended form of development for the zone, Administration used the application to identify additional recommended bylaw changes that will streamline the process for developers and encourage more transit-oriented development and housing choice:

- Exempting indoor Common Amenity Area located on the rooftop from the calculation of maximum height;
- Increasing flexibility for landscaping above parkade structures;
- Accounting for the dimensional height of structural beams where the tower transitions into the foundation;
- Small increases in maximum allowable density (10 additional dwellings per hectare where rooftop amenity is provided);
- Reducing the side setback for row housing or podium development less than four storeys;
- Simplifying setbacks requirements; and
- Removing regulations that refer to other sections of Zoning Bylaw 12800.

Reducing the side setback for row housing from 4.5 metres to 2.4 metres will align the setback requirements of the zone with the way that side setbacks are regulated in other zones. Excluding Common Indoor Amenity area from the calculation of height will enable builders to provide this type of amenity area without losing buildable dwellings, and contributes to the social functions of the buildings. Other proposed changes are geared towards ensuring that design outcomes are not overly cost-prohibitive, such as the previous soil depth requirement. The other changes are based on financial considerations and consultation with the design and development

community. Taken together, the draft amendments will remove barriers to construction in the (RA9) High Rise Apartment Zone and promote further use of this zone. The changes in Attachment 1 provide a “pathway to permit” to facilitate a modest high rise of up to 20 storeys to be built without variances and to facilitate transit-oriented residential development.

Public Engagement

An earlier draft version of this report was circulated to external stakeholders in advance of the June 25, 2019 Urban Planning Committee, and again on July 8, 2019. Comments received were as follows:

- Recommend increase the height by two metres for all development instead of only when there is a load transition slab that requires this height.
- Recommend removing roads and lanes from the discussion about off-site landscaping improvements, as any upgrades required for roads and lanes are completed through a separate process.
- The proposed change to the wording for soil depth from 1.2 m across the board to “sufficient soil depth for the species shown on the landscape plan” may not be clear enough for proper implementation.
- Ensure alignment with upcoming and recently passed amendments that change the names of use classes.

Attachment

1. Charter Bylaw 19013
2. Mark-up of Proposed Text Amendment to Zoning Bylaw 12800