

Infill Roadmap Initiative

2021 Update

Recommendation

That the January 19, 2021, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report UFCSD00122, be received for information.

Executive Summary

The *Infill Roadmap 2018* is the City of Edmonton's work plan to support more and better infill in Edmonton, and was created as a precursor to The City Plan. This work advanced considerably in 2020, with seven additional actions completed, including four of the Roadmap's "Big Moves". To date, 16 of the 25 actions are now complete.

The actions completed in 2020 have focused on providing more and better information to the public, exploring creative opportunities to support additional infill, and aligning our regulations to match the City's commitment to welcoming more people and new homes into older neighbourhoods. The remaining actions reflect the City's ongoing commitment to excellent service and ambitions to tackle broader issues through major initiatives such as the Zoning Bylaw Renewal and City Plan implementation projects.

Report

Administration presented the *Infill Roadmap 2018* at the July 3, 2018, Urban Planning Committee meeting, and its implementation plan was funded through a service package in the 2019-2022 operating budget. The roadmap is now two-thirds complete with nine of the 25 actions completed in 2019 and seven completed in 2020.

Detailed descriptions of progress on each action are provided in Attachment 1.

Highlights of Completed Actions

Actions completed in 2020 can be roughly divided into three categories:

1. Providing more and better information to the public
 - Action 1 - Prioritize infill at key nodes and corridors
 - Action 9 - Better inform residents on how they can effectively participate in the planning process
 - Action 11 - Create a publicly available map of optimal infill development locations for medium, high scale and mixed use developments based on best evidence and neighbourhood level indicators

2. Exploring creative opportunities to support additional infill
 - Action 5 - Pursue partnerships to pilot innovative housing forms
 - Action 7 - Investigate available tools to address the challenges of infill land assembly and financing mixed use developments
 - Action 8 - Pilot enhancements to alley to encourage laneway housing development
3. Aligning regulations with the City's ambitions
 - Action 20 - Reduce barriers to infill caused by parking requirements as part of the Comprehensive Parking Review.

The outcomes of each of these actions are described below.

Providing more and better information to the public

Action 1 - Prioritize Infill at key nodes and corridors

The completion of *The City Plan* constitutes a major milestone for planning in 2020. Edmonton's new Municipal Development Plan proposes to focus redevelopment and intensification within a network of nodes and corridors, as was intended by Action 1 of the Infill Roadmap. Action 1 was completed through the extensive research, analysis and engagement that went into creating the nodes and corridors network for *The City Plan*. More precise direction for redevelopment within this network during the first phase of the plan will be provided through district plans as part of the implementation of *The City Plan*, and the Zoning Bylaw Renewal initiative will develop regulations to support the redevelopment of these areas.

Action 9 - Better inform residents on how they can participate in the planning process

As part of this action, Administration worked with focus groups to better understand the information needs of stakeholders impacted by infill development. Using this input, Administration updated infill-related materials and made these more accessible through website changes. Because of COVID-19 impacts, some communications and engagement strategies could not be implemented in 2020, such as the Infill Ambassadors program. However, ongoing engagement has continued through the regular work of the Infill Liaison Team, which was created as a result of the first infill roadmap.

Action 11 - Create optimal infill map

This action was completed in part through the identification of Nodes and Corridors in *The City Plan* and will be further detailed through district plans in 2022. However, work in 2020 also included the creation of the Residential Redevelopment Tool. This interactive online mapping tool provides clarity on the factors used to inform the selection of sites for residential redevelopment, while also providing easier access to

the City's Open Data for developers and builders. This tool was released in Q4 2020 and will be promoted through the City's infill communications in 2021.

Exploring creative opportunities to support additional infill

Action 5 - Pursue partnerships to pilot innovative housing forms

This action featured the Missing Middle Infill Design Competition, which ran in 2019 and drew 30 proposals from teams from across Canada and as far away as the UK. This competition raised the profile of infill development in Edmonton and generated new ideas on what infill development can look like and accomplish. In 2020, Administration closed this action through a review of lessons learned and by identifying opportunities for future design competitions to further this work.

Action 7 - Investigate challenges of land assembly and financing mixed use

Administration met with industry stakeholders to explore challenges of land assembly and financing mixed use, and the opportunity for the City to address these challenges. These conversations revealed that recent regulatory changes and process improvements have helped address the issues underpinning this action, and that the City has limited influence over remaining land assembly and financing challenges. Additional regulatory changes to support mixed-use development are anticipated through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal. A report closing this action is available through the City's website.

Action 8 - Pilot enhancements to alley to encourage laneway housing development

This action began with stakeholder conversations, followed by an internal review of opportunities to enhance laneways to encourage more laneway housing. The review determined that there was insufficient budget within the Alley Renewal Program, as well as insufficient opportunity within current laneway standards to carry out laneway enhancements beyond the Council-mandated scope of the Alley Renewal Program at this time. However, Blatchford's design standards for laneway housing may provide an opportunity to examine the effects of laneway design standards on enabling new forms of residential development. Findings from this study could inform new laneway standards for future greenfield development. The Roadmap team will also work with YEGarden Suites to explore an interim approach supporting this housing type.

Aligning our regulations with our ambitions

Action 20 - Reduce parking requirements

This action was another of the Infill Roadmap's "Big Moves", and was completed in 2020 through changes to Zoning Bylaw 12800 to allow Open Option Parking. These changes are expected to reduce the costs of infill development, especially within the City's nodes and corridors that have frequent transit service. The impacts of these changes will become more apparent over time, as development can respond to regulatory changes.

Next Steps

Nine actions remain in the Infill Roadmap. These can be divided into two categories:

1. Project specific actions that will conclude by the end of the roadmap in 2022:
 - Action 2 - Review infrastructure capacity in Edmonton's older neighbourhoods and identify the infrastructure investments needed to support infill.
 - Action 12 - Reduce barriers to the use of Low Impact Development (LID) practices for low and medium scale infill.
 - Action 15 - Develop a process to review and update or retire plans and policies that are not aligned with current policy and regulations.
 - Action 17 - Investigate new processes and mechanisms to improve lot grading in infill situations.
 - Action 19 - Simplify the low scale residential zones for existing neighbourhoods.
 - Action 25 - Integrate urban design regulations into the Zoning Bylaw through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal project.

2. Ongoing actions that will require sustained effort beyond 2022:
 - Action 6 - Develop tools to improve housing affordability in all neighbourhoods.
 - Action 13 - Monitor and make the necessary improvements to regulate how the City addresses emerging issues related to infill construction.
 - Action 14 - Improve the consistency and timelines for the infill development permitting process.

Significant progress has been made on each of these actions already. The actions in the former category are underway either as stand-alone projects (Actions 2, 12 and 17) or have been integrated into larger initiatives (Actions 15, 19, and 25). Further updates on these actions will be presented in 2021 as individual projects progress through their milestones.

The latter category has also seen meaningful improvements (see Attachment 1), but will never truly conclude, as affordable housing needs and opportunities for improved service for the public and builders will continue beyond the timeframe of the Infill Roadmap.

Supporting infill in the long term

The *2018 Infill Roadmap* is intended to be the final infill roadmap. However, the six project outcomes will remain relevant into the future (see Attachment 1, page 1). Beyond 2022, these project outcomes will be supported through ongoing work under the strategic direction of *The City Plan*. The new Municipal Development Plan sets

bold targets for infill - that 50 percent of new units will be added through infill city wide, and that 600,000 new residents will be welcomed into the redevelopment area. Achieving these targets will require ongoing efforts to improve policy, regulations, and processes for infill development.

Over the next two years, Administration will be laying the groundwork for the successful implementation of *The City Plan* through a variety of related projects including district planning, the city planning framework project, and the Zoning Bylaw renewal initiative. These projects are identified as priorities through Reimagine City Building, and will work together to welcome more people and new homes into our existing communities for decades to come.

Engagement and Information Sharing

The Evolving Infill project that produced the Infill Roadmap was the product of extensive public engagement that spanned 20 months. Between 2016 and 2018, approximately 3,300 Edmontonians provided feedback at one of the in-person events or through two online surveys. Administration uses engagement results to guide work on the Roadmap and continues to engage stakeholders to advance specific actions. Administration is using website improvements, social media, newsletters and annual reports to Urban Planning Committee to report back and be accountable to members of the public.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is attractive and compact			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
City achieves residential densification	New residential units in core and mature neighbourhoods (as a percentage of total new residential units city-wide)	27% (2020) 26% (2019) 27% (2018) 20% (2017) 24% (2016) 13% (2015)	25% Based on the targets in The Way We Grow and in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (2018); new target to be established through City Plan

Attachments

1. Infill Roadmap Implementation Summary

Others Reviewing this Report

- M. Persson, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- J. Meliefste, Acting Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services

- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor