

Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review – Neighbourhood Level Infill Development

ISSUE

As part of the Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review Project (Zoning Bylaw Project), Administration is reviewing regulations specific to infill development for primary dwellings in Established Neighbourhoods. Zoning Bylaw Project and Engagement Plans are outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

Neighbourhood Level Infill Development occurs when the existing housing stock is replaced, secondary suites are built, or subdivision occurs and new additional dwellings are constructed. This results in renewal of the housing stock and can result in a gradual increase in density. Currently, the Zoning Bylaw contains regulations specific to Neighbourhood Level Infill Development. These regulations apply to one- and two-unit, as well as semi-detached dwellings (primary dwellings) in Established Neighbourhoods. Established Neighbourhoods are defined in the Zoning Bylaw and are those neighbourhoods located within Circle Drive, Sutherland, Forest Grove and Montgomery Place.

The infill regulations for primary dwellings in Established Neighbourhoods, set out in Bylaw No. 8770, Zoning Bylaw, 2009 (Zoning Bylaw), were adopted by City Council on March 23, 2015. Regulations are based on recommendations contained in the Neighbourhood Infill Development Strategy, which outlined best practices, design guidelines, design flexibility and ways to minimize the impact of new dwellings on neighbouring residents. Regulations, in particular those that regulate height and massing, ensure new infill development does not detract from the character of the neighbourhood and balances demand for contemporary housing with the existing built form. A map of Established Neighbourhoods and an overview of infill regulations is provided in Appendix 1. [Regulations and Design Guidelines for Primary Dwellings](#) was created to provide a comprehensive guide for infill development.

A review of these infill regulations was completed in 2017 which included consultation with the development industry. No changes were proposed at that time; however, designers did indicate that infill dwellings are more challenging to design under the regulations introduced in 2015.

CURRENT STATUS

Bylaw No. 9700, Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2020 (Official Community Plan Bylaw) sets out objectives and policies for infill growth. Section 1.3 (7) (page 69 of the Official Community Plan Bylaw) states:

“Objectives – Neighbourhood Infill

- (a) Support the City’s goal of accommodating 10% of total growth within Neighbourhood Infill areas.

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- (b) Facilitate neighbourhood infill that:
 - i) helps meet the housing needs of a diverse population;
 - ii) makes efficient use of civic and community infrastructure;
 - iii) gradually increases residential densities, where appropriate; and
 - iv) recognizes the interests of local residents and the impact of development on neighbourhood character and infrastructure.”

Based on building permit data, the 10-year average is 108 infill dwellings per year, which is 13% of all new primary dwellings built in the city. Infill regulations have been in place since March 2015. The 5-year average is 118 infill dwellings per year, which is 18% of all new primary dwellings built in the City.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

A review of infill regulations is being undertaken as part of the Zoning Bylaw Project. The purpose of the review is to evaluate, in consideration of the Neighbourhood Infill Objectives in the Official Community Plan Bylaw, the effect that regulations have had on the built form of infill dwellings and do a technical analysis of regulations. This review is supported by both Administration and development industry stakeholders. It is anticipated there will be amendments to some of the regulations.

Category 1 and 2 Neighbourhoods

Regulations were developed for two distinctive forms of neighbourhood development patterns in Established Neighbourhoods, based on the following:

1. Category 1 Neighbourhoods are those where development occurred prior to World War 2. The common characteristics of this area include narrow streets set out on a grid pattern with rear lanes. The houses range from one to two and a half stories.
2. Category 2 Neighbourhoods are those where development occurred following World War 2 up to the 1970s. The layout of these neighbourhoods combines both grid pattern and curvilinear crescents, many of which have lanes. Houses are generally one story and may contain an attached garage.

Scope and Work Plan for the Infill Regulations Review

The workplan for infill regulations review will include a municipal scan of regulations from other Canadian cities; a detailed analysis of current regulations; and engagement with the development industry, Established Neighbourhood residents and the broader public. Appendix 2 provides information on which regulations will be reviewed.

Communications and Engagement Plan

Infill regulations are intended to balance the interests of many stakeholders, including the development industry, property owners and neighbourhood residents.

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An engagement plan has been developed for the purpose of involving and obtaining feedback from those stakeholders with an interest in and/or who are impacted by infill development. The review will be undertaken with the objective of balancing industry and community needs.

The steps in the plan include:

1. City Council - Obtaining feedback from City Councillors via one-to-one meetings, particularly with those Councillors whose Wards contain the Established Neighbourhoods.
2. Neighbourhood Level Infill Focus Group - This group will be composed of industry representatives and Established Neighbourhood residents who have knowledge of and an interest in infill development. This group will meet throughout the infill review. The purpose of the group will be to provide feedback to Administration on proposed changes to infill regulations. This group will also be asked to provide feedback to Administration on broader public engagement approaches and opportunities specific to the infill regulations. A similar group was formed when the infill regulations were initially developed and was effective in guiding the development of those regulations. Industry representatives will be identified with the assistance of the Saskatoon & Region Homebuilders' Association. See Appendix 3 for additional information.
3. Stakeholder Engagement – One-to-one meetings with individual stakeholder or interest groups will be done to review and gather feedback on proposed amendments. Groups identified include industry representatives, heritage stakeholders, residential realtors and affordable housing providers.
4. Community Engagement - Proposed amendments will be made available to all residents for comment through the Engage Page, the Project website and will be communicated via social media and other Zoning Bylaw Project information sources. Engagement events will also be held either online or in person depending on Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review Project, including the review of infill regulations, is funded by Capital Budget 2300 – CY – Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review.

NEXT STEPS

Administration will complete the background research and begin discussions with Councillors and stakeholders in early 2021. A call for participants for the Neighbourhood Level Infill Focus Group will go out in early 2021. It is anticipated the review of infill regulations, including Zoning Bylaw amendments, will be completed in 2021.

A What We Heard Report will be provided by Administration when the proposed amendments are brought forward for consideration at a Public Hearing.

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APPENDICES

1. Zoning Bylaw Regulations for Primary Dwellings in Established Neighbourhoods
2. Scope and Work Plan for Infill Regulations Review
3. Neighbourhood Level Infill Focus Group - Additional Information

REPORT APPROVAL

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